

Scottish Painters

By WALTER ARMSTRONG.



*With many Illustrations after
RAEBURN, WILKIE, GEDDES, PHILLIP, CHALMERS,
ORCHARDSON, PETTIE, MACBETH,
and other ARTISTS.*



PRAYER. Etched by W. P. Mayn. from a Picture by Paul Chalmers R.S.A.

Scottish Painters

A CRITICAL STUDY

BY

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I.—FRAGMENTS OF ANCIENT ART IN SCOTLAND; GEORGE JAMESONE; ALLAN RAMSAY; ALEXANDER RUNCIMAN	1
II.—DAVID ALLAN; SIR HENRY RAEBURN; ALEXANDER NASMYTH; GEORGE WATSON; THOMSON OF DUDDINGSTON; ANDREW WILSON; JOHN WILSON	9
III.—ALEXANDER CARSE; WILLIAM HOME LIZARS; WALTER GEIKIE; SIR DAVID WILKIE	20
IV.—JOHN BURNET; JAMES BURNET; ALEXANDER FRASER (<i>senior</i>); WILLIAM NICHOLSON; ANDREW GEDDES	30
V.—THE SCHETKYS; PATRICK NASMYTH; D. O. HILL; HORATIO MACCULLOCH; J. A. HOUSTON; DAVID ROBERTS; SIR JOHN WATSON GORDON; JOHN GRAHAM GILBERT; COLVIN SMITH; WILLIAM BONNAR; SIR DANIEL MACNEE; SIR FRANCIS GRANT	40
VI.—WILLIAM KIDD; SIR GEORGE HARVEY; ROBERT SCOTT LAUDER; JOHN ECKFORD LAUDER; DAVID SCOTT; WILLIAM DYCE; JOHN PHILLIP	48
VII.—JOHN PHILLIP; JAMES CASSIE; WILLIAM SIMSON; EDMUND THORNTON CRAWFORD; THOMAS DUNCAN; ALEXANDER CHRISTIE; JAMES DRUMMOND; WILLIAM BORTHWICK JOHNSTONE	57
VIII.—WILLIAM LEIGHTON LEITCH; SAM BOUGH; GEORGE MANSON; GEORGE PAUL CHALMERS	65
IX.—JOHN MILNE DONALD; JAMES DOCHARTY; ALEXANDER FRASER; W. M'TAGGART; JOHN MACWHIRTER; DAVID MURRAY; COLIN HUNTER; HAMILTON MACALLUM; PETER GRAHAM	73
X.—SIR NOEL PATON; ERSKINE NICOL; THOMAS FAED; SIR WILLIAM FETTES DOUGLAS; GEORGE REID; JOHN PETTIE; WILLIAM QUILLER ORCHARDSON; ROBERT WALKER MACBETH; JOHN REID	81

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PRAYER. <i>Etched by Rajon, after Paul Chalmers</i>	<i>Frontispiece</i>
PORTRAIT OF LORD NEWTON. <i>After Raeburn</i>	<i>Page 16</i>
THE ARRIVAL OF THE RICH RELATION. <i>After Wilkie, from a Pen and Ink Drawing</i>	24 ✓
BLINDMAN'S BUFF. <i>After Wilkie, from the Picture in the National Gallery</i>	28 ✓
THE ARTIST'S MOTHER. <i>Etching by Geddes, reproduced by Amand Durand</i>	34 ✓
LANDSCAPE, WITH COTTAGE. <i>Etched by Massé, after Nasmyth</i>	40 ✓
BURGOS CATHEDRAL. <i>Etched by C. O. Murray, after David Roberts</i>	44 ✓
HOLY WATER. <i>Etched by G. W. Rhead, after J. Phillips</i>	58 ✓
HOLMWOOD COMMON. <i>After Sam Bough</i>	66 ✓
CELLARDYKE HARBOUR. <i>Etched by Chauvel, after Sam Bough</i>	72 ✓
A BANFFSHIRE HARBOUR. <i>Etched by Colin Hunter, A.R.A.</i>	76 ✓
DORNOCH. <i>After G. Reid, R.S.A.</i>	82 ✓
‘DOST KNOW THIS WATERFLY?’ <i>Etched by G. W. Rhead, after J. Pettie, R.A.</i>	84 ✓
THE FIRST CLOUD. <i>After W. Q. Orchardson, R.A.</i>	86 ✓
A CAMBRIDGESHIRE FERRY. <i>Etched by R. Macbeth</i>	88 ✓

VIGNETTES

	<i>Page</i>
GEORGE JAMESONE. FROM A PORTRAIT PAINTED BY HIMSELF	5
THE ORIGIN OF PAINTING. BY D. ALLAN	10
PORTRAIT OF THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALISON, LL.B., F.R.S. BY RAEBURN	13
PORTRAIT OF DR. ALEXANDER ADAM. BY RAEBURN	14
PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF. BY RAEBURN	15
LANDSCAPE. BY ANDREW WILSON	18
SKETCH FOR ‘NOT AT HOME.’ BY SIR DAVID WILKIE	22
SKETCH FOR A GROUP IN ‘THE READING OF A WILL.’ BY SIR DAVID WILKIE	23

	<i>Page</i>
THE HUSTINGS: SKETCH FOR A PICTURE. BY SIR DAVID WILKIE	26
SKETCH FOR THE 'WATERLOO GAZETTE.' BY SIR DAVID WILKIE	27
THE DRINKING PLACE. AFTER THE ETCHING BY JOHN BURNET	31
REMBRANDT'S HOUSE. AFTER A PLATE BY JOHN BURNET	32
MURDER OF THE REGENT MURRAY. BY SIR W. ALLAN	33
OLD WOMAN EXAMINING A RING. FROM THE ETCHING BY ANDREW GEDDES	35
PORTRAIT OF ARCHIBALD SKIRVING. FROM THE ETCHING BY ANDREW GEDDES	36
READING A WILL. AFTER THE ETCHING BY WILKIE	37
THE POPE AND THE GOLDSMITH. AFTER THE ETCHING BY WILKIE	38
VIEW OF AYR. BY D. O. HILL	42
CHAPEL OF THE KINGS, AT GRANADA, WITH TOMBS OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA. FROM A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING AT SOUTH KENSINGTON. BY DAVID ROBERTS	45
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AS CHANCELLOR OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY. FROM A DRAWING BY SIR FRANCIS GRANT	46
STUDY FOR A JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON. BY W. DYCE	53
STUDY BY W. DYCE	54
STUDY BY W. DYCE	55
STUDY BY W. DYCE	56
SKETCH PORTRAIT OF SIR J. E. MILLAIS, BART., R.A., WHEN A BOY. BY J. PHILLIP	61
TULLY VEOLAN. FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER W. L. LEITCH	65
EDINBURGH, FROM CRAIGLEITH QUARRY. FROM A LITHOGRAPH AFTER W. L. LEITCH	66
LANDSCAPE BY S. BOUGH. FROM A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM	67
LINCOLN, FROM THE FIELDS. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. ORROCK	68
WARKWORTH CASTLE. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. ORROCK	69
CAERLAVEROCK CASTLE. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. ORROCK	70
FROM A STUDY BY THE LATE GEORGE MANSON	71
NEWARK, ON THE YARROW. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. MACWHIRTER	74
NORHAM CASTLE. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. MACWHIRTER	75
OVER THE BORDER. FROM A PEN SKETCH BY J. MACWHIRTER	76
THE UPPER RAPIDS, NIAGARA. FROM A PEN AND INK DRAWING BY COLIN HUNTER	78
LOBSTER FISHERS. FROM A PEN AND INK DRAWING BY COLIN HUNTER	79
NAPOLEON ON THE BELLEROPHON. FROM THE PICTURE BY W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.	86
SKETCHES BY W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.	87
SKETCH FOR A PICTURE BY W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.	88

SCOTTISH PAINTERS.

I.

Fragments of Ancient Art in Scotland; George Jamesone; Allan Ramsay; Alexander Runciman.

ART in these islands still awaits an historian. Our Architecture and our Painting since the days of Hogarth have found students enough, but our artistic development as a whole has never been traced. We have acquiesced when foreign writers told us that we had no art, and that all we can show is an echo from the Continent. Such apathy, of course, has had a reason. The historian loves a continuous development. His ambition is to trace growth from its germ to the tender shoots thrown out in the last genial season. No such continuity is to be found in our national arts. Between the Conquest and the fifteenth century they grew with a vigour as great as they enjoyed elsewhere, and perhaps upon more consistent lines. Then came the Wars of the Roses, which did for us what the Thirty Years' War did for Germany. Scarcely had their effects begun to wear away than the Reformation discouraged, for a time, most of those minor arts which are linked with religion. After the Reformation came the Great Rebellion and the paralysing supremacy of the Puritans. Neither the Revolution nor the arrival of the Hanoverian Kings was harmless, for they destroyed the ideals of the Stuarts and replaced them with the provincialism of Germany. All this means more than a broken development. It means one continually broken off and re-started on new lines; so that, when we try to follow its course, we have to depend for coherence on national character only. In tracing the growth of an art like that of Egypt, or Greece, or even of France, we have fidelity to principle as well. With our neighbours Gothic sprang out of Romanesque, and grew till its sap was exhausted. By that time the Renaissance, with all it meant, was ready to take its place. In Great Britain things could not go so easily. The small size of the country, its comparatively low population, and its insularity, combined to prevent a cut-down art from reviving by itself. After each period of trouble the growth had to be renewed with alien seed, and so the story is that of a series of developments. Of these our present subject is not the least important.

Speaking of Architecture, Fergusson says there are few countries in the world of which it is so difficult to write connectedly as of Scotland. This, he goes on to declare, is because her art is not indigenus. Such a reproach has to be borne by every small country tied to the skirts of a large one. Her art is sure not to be her own by origin, so that we must form our judgments by consideration of how she treats the borrowed ideas. Scottish Gothic is as much a thing by itself as English, and there is no evidence that the peculiar beauty of her abbeys and cathedrals was not due to native artists in at least as large a proportion.

The bluntness, amounting to brutality, with which the accomplished writer I have quoted goes on to declare that 'no one who knows anything of the ethnography of art would suspect the people who now inhabit the lowlands of Scotland of inventing any form of architecture, or of feeling much sympathy with it when introduced from abroad,' is quite gratuitous. Forms of art never are invented, they grow; and history shows clearly enough that the rate of growth depends more upon conditions than character. Wherever a thick population has dwelt in safety, art has flourished; an indigenous art when there has been none to borrow from, a borrowed art when borrowing was easy. Egypt, Assyria, India, China, Japan, have each had a national art, and in each case originality has been in proportion to isolation. Wherever it has been easy to borrow there has been no originality. Egyptian art was completely original, because the Egypt in which it grew was completely alone in the world. Assyrian art was less original, because Assyria had more opportunities for borrowing. Again, the art of China was absolutely original, because her isolation was absolute. The geographical position of a country, its relations with its neighbours, and pure accident, have a great deal more to do with originality in aesthetic matters than people suppose.

Looked at in this light, few nations can be less fairly blamed for a want of the quality in question than the Scotch. Sharing a small island with a strong and wealthy foe, and—what was perhaps still more fatal—lying within arm's length of a powerful friend, it would have been a miracle had her general forms of art not been one with theirs. And so, in fact, they were. But if we examine the abbeys and churches of mediaeval Scotland we find that neither in plan, nor in elevation, nor in detail, are they copies of anything to be seen elsewhere. French and English elements are both to be found, but they are used in a new way. The national note is a combination of grace and vigour which is quite peculiar. No Scottish building of which we have any trace embodies any great poetical conception. There is nothing to give even a distant echo of such things as the great portals of Amiens or the west front of Peterborough. But, in examples too many to count, we find elegance of plan and arrangement combined with refined decoration. I have dwelt upon all this partly because it seems to me that one cannot too often oppose the idea that any nation is condemned to aesthetic sterility by defects of constitution; partly because, on tendencies akin to those visible in this early architecture, the distinctive features of Scottish art are founded even yet.

No country with such remains as the ruined churches of Scotland can have been so poor in art as she is too often said to have been during the centuries of her alliance with France. Each of those great abbeys must have formed a centre for culture of a sort. From them must have radiated some love for beauty and some knowledge of the activities which have always flourished in the cloister. That few traces of anything of the sort have come down to us is not surprising. The political history of Scotland in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, accounts for that. The reformers and patriots of England were bad enough, but they were mild as milk beside those of Scotland. It is pretty sure that, if we could get at all those men destroyed, we should find ample ground for disbelief in the aesthetic destitution of the Scots. The great abbeys were not isolated phenomena. From their splendours of carved stone down to the domestic furniture of the people there must have been a gradation—an abrupt one, no doubt, compared even to that of England, but still not a precipice. Some remains of it all survive even yet. Among these are a few portraits from the fifteenth century, a few tombs, a few ecclesiastical wall-paintings, and a few manuscripts with rough vignettes. Of the finer illuminated books we have none that can surely be traced to Scotland, but it may be assumed that Scottish monks practised the usual arts of their calling, and the disappearance of all their work is but another proof of the thoroughness with which Knox and his crew went about their business.

In notices of Scottish painters a curious story is often copied from Pinkerton, to prove that the art existed in the country as early as the first half of the fifteenth century. It appears that in 1430 a Highland robber having stolen a poor woman's cow, she vowed to

wear no shoes until she had told the King. On this the savage seized her, and, in ridicule of her oath, nailed horseshoes on her feet. On recovering from her wounds she went to the palace, told her story, and showed the scars. The robber was caught and tried: on conviction he was clothed in a canvas frock, *on which a picture of a man nailing horseshoes on to a woman's feet was painted.* Thus attired he was exposed for two days in the streets of Perth and then hanged. The art here must have been archaic! It is said that James I. was an illuminator of books, but his work has either been lost or is not now to be identified. To the reign of his grandson belongs the earliest, and in some ways the most interesting, of Scottish pictures—the famous altar-piece at Holyrood, which used to be ascribed to Mabuse.

A diptych with four subjects of equal importance was at no time a common form for an altar-piece. In Germany, indeed, two panels were used now and then with a carved figure or group between them. But then the reverse sides of each were comparatively neglected. The Holyrood picture consists of two panels, each 6 feet 10 inches high and 3 feet 8 inches wide, and the painting on one side is as careful as that on the other. The four subjects are a 'Trinity' and three groups of portraits. It used to be thought that the chief figures on the reverse sides were portraits of James IV. and his Queen, Margaret Tudor. That this was a mistake was first shown by Pinkerton, in his 'Icono-graphia Scotica,' published in 1797. He clearly proved that the kneeling king and queen were really James III. and Margaret of Denmark; the boy behind the king no doubt being James IV. Pinkerton's evidence, which was quite conclusive, need not here be recapitulated. On the panel with the 'Trinity' the Father sits enthroned with His lifeless Son resting upon His knees, and the Dove fluttering between their heads. The fourth subject is a donor kneeling in the foreground with two angels playing on an organ behind him. These three figures have been plausibly recognised as portraits too. As to the donor there can be no doubt. He is Sir Edward Bonkil, the first Provost of Trinity College Church, in Edinburgh, for which the altar-piece was painted. There is nothing to support the ascription of the work to Mabuse. The style is not his, and the dates do not fit. The school is that of the Van Eycks. Mr. David Laing* seems to claim it for a native Scotsman. To allow that, we should have to assume the existence of some unrecorded Scottish painter who had learnt his art in Flanders, and learnt it very thoroughly, and then exhausted himself in a single work. The picture has been severely cleaned, but is still a good example of its school, while as a group of royal portraits from such an early time its value is unique.†

In the reign of James IV. both artists and artificers were regally encouraged: the accounts of that king's expenditure still exist, and they record payments to many of his own countrymen. Among those John Pratt, Thomas Galbraith, Andrew Laing, and Alexander Chalmers, seem to have been the most important. Their names recur frequently as decorators of the royal palaces at Stirling and Falkland. As for portraits dating from this period, not a few are said to be still extant, but it is impossible to say whether they deserve their reputation without examining each. From the reign of James V. a curious instance of our over-readiness to ascribe everything good to foreign workmen may be given. The splendid carved roof, now destroyed, of the presence-chamber at Stirling used to be called the work of some unknown foreigner. But within the last few years an examination of the royal accounts, and of documents in the possession of the Drummond family, has proved it to be by one John Drummond of Auchterarder, and one Andrew Wood, his assistant.

But in the thrice-troubled times of James V. and his daughter art could not really have flourished, although a few scraps of evidence show that it was not killed even then. Pierre

* 'A Historical Description of the Altar-piece belonging to Her Majesty in the Palace of Holyrood.' By David Laing. (Edinburgh, 1857.)

† Pinkerton, and, following him, most of those who have written of this altar-piece speak of it as painted for the royal chapel at Stirling. That its real destination was the high altar of Trinity Church, in Edinburgh, cannot be doubted after reading the evidence collected by Mr. Laing.

Quesnel, the painter of some famous windows at the Augustine, in Paris, was the son of a Scot, and was himself 'given,' as Marolles puts it, to James V. by his wife, Mary of Lorraine. He married one Madeleine Digby, who bore him two sons at Holyrood. He may have been the author of some of those portraits of the King which seem to have been almost infinitely multiplied. A tragic story is connected with a pair of James VI. and his Queen. Early in James's reign a town officer, or bailiff, of Edinburgh, seized some furniture for debt, and took it to be sold at the Cross. Among the 'lots' were portraits of James and Anne. These the bailiff proposed to display on the public gibbet, and proceeded to drive a nail for the purpose. The people, knowing the danger, interposed, and prevented him from carrying out his design. But the King, to whom the story was of course carried, was so enraged, that the poor bailiff was tried, convicted, and hanged, all within the space of twenty-four hours.

George Jamesone, the Aberdonian to whom Horace Walpole gave the title of the 'Scottish Vandyck,' was the son of Andrew Jamesone, a sort of city architect and builder to the town of Aberdeen, and of Marjorie Anderson. The families of both parents were of the solidly respectable and well-to-do class, while on his mother's side, at least, George had relations who made some stir in their native place by their intellectual gifts. His uncle, David Anderson, of Finzeach, was one of those rare people who combine versatility with practical sense. Parson Gordon calls him 'the most skilful mechanic that ever lived in Scotland.' He was known at Aberdeen as 'Davy-do-a'-thing' (everything), and a story is preserved which credits him with the clever removal of a stumbling-block to the free use of the harbour. It seems that in the fair-way stood a huge boulder, on which ships were apt to strike unless very carefully handled. About this stone he secured at low water a great number of empty water-tight barrels. On these the confident Davy took his seat, in presence of a crowd of towns-folk. As the tide flowed it lifted barrels and stone, and the triumphant engineer was towed off down the harbour to drop his boulder where it could do no mischief. For this service, and others like it, he was in 1598 exempted from the payment of taxes. All this betrays a strain of originality in the Andersons which may account for much in their young kinsman's career. An excellent portrait of Davy Anderson, by his nephew, hangs in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. It was bequeathed to the National Museum of Antiquities by Mr. David Laing. Jamesone himself was born most likely in 1588. Cunningham says, very positively, that he saw the light on the very day that Queen Mary lost her head at Fotheringay. That would put his birth in 1587. Other authorities give the year 1586. There is no positive evidence in the matter, but the entries relating to his father's marriage and the births of his own brothers and sisters, which Mr. John Bulloch* has searched out, make it likely that 1588 was the year. After his general education, which he received at the University of his native town, was complete, he seems at once to have devoted himself to art. There is plenty of evidence to prove that his family was well off, and that he was never compelled to work hard for his bread. The stiffness of his conceptions as an artist seems to negative the idea that he came under the influence of Rubens in his first youth. His stay at Antwerp, for which again we have only the evidence of style and tradition, may then have taken place between 1615 and 1621. Cunningham says he did not return to Scotland until 1628, but that is certainly a mistake, for pictures exist there dated from 1621 onwards, while he was married at Aberdeen in 1624.

In 1616, Antwerp was still in the dust. Writing in that year, Sir Dudley Carleton, the intimate friend of Rubens, says, 'I could never set my eyes in the whole length of a street upon forty persons at once . . . in many places grass grows in the streets.' But eight years before Rubens had established himself in the town, and had done what one man could to

* 'George Jamesone, his Life and Works.' By John Bulloch. With two Etchings by G. Reid, R.S.A. (Edinburgh: David Douglas. 1885.) Our portrait of Jamesone is reproduced from Mr. Reid's etching by kind permission of the artist and publisher.

lessen the effect of the Spanish Terror. Among the many traditions about Jamesone which long flourished in Scotland, was one that connected him with Sir Peter Paul's second wife, Helena Forman, according to this, was a native of Aberdeen, and a cousin of Jamesone, whom after her alliance with Rubens she sent for, that he might profit by the master's teaching. It is curious that Forman, the right but long-neglected version of the lady's name, is a fairly common patronymic at Aberdeen. The story as it stands, however, receives the *coup-de-grâce* from the fact that Helena did not marry Rubens until 1630, and was then no more than sixteen. During Jamesone's stay at Antwerp the chief thing he learnt was a Flemish use of colour. Among the crowd of portraits ascribed to him in Scotland, there are many in the opaque, heavy-handed manner, that might well have been caught from the daubers who were active all over Britain in the time of Elizabeth and James I. Some of these may be genuine and may represent Jamesone's power before he went to Flanders. His characteristic



GEORGE JAMESONE. FROM A PORTRAIT PAINTED BY HIMSELF.

manner, in which the paint is put on thinly and with the greatest solicitude for the ground, would then be the fruit of his stay at Antwerp. It is the first sign of what has ever since been a main feature of Scottish painting.

One of the first portraits painted by Jamesone on his return to Aberdeen was that of Sir James Stewart, Earl of Traquair. Soon afterwards the young Earl of Montrose sat to him, riding over from St. Andrews for the sittings. And as every year went by his sitters increased, until we find him making contracts for whole series of portraits. In his early years he seems to have had a mistress, for his will provides for a natural daughter; but on November 12th, 1624, he married Isobel Tosh, who bore him six children. Her portrait he painted in a picture now lost, which is engraved in Walpole's 'Anecdotes.' The registers of baptism for Jamesone's children are all extant; and the signatures of the 'gossippis and cummeris' include those of many known folks, confirming that notion of the painter's prosperity which we get from other evidence.

In 1633 Charles I. came to Scotland, and Jamesone painted his portrait. The story that on the King's entrance into 'Auld Reekie,' the Town Council hung all the 'Jamesones' they could collect on either side of the way, is told in many different forms. Perhaps the truth

is that pictures were so displayed, among them many by Jamesone, and that he had the management of the business. In the same year the painter started on a tour abroad with Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy, going as far as Rome. It is often said in lives of Jamesone that his portrait is in the famous collection at Florence, but this seems to be untrue. At least, his name does not appear in the catalogue; and Mr. Bulloch tells us that, in 1882, Mr. George Reid searched in the Uffizi in vain for anything that could have given rise to the assertion. In the chapel of the Scots' College at Rome, however, there are four pictures which tradition ascribes to Jamesone. After an absence of some two years, the painter was again at home and busy with sitters, first at Aberdeen and afterwards at Edinburgh. Press of work led to some falling off in his art, and perhaps to his comparatively early death. We know that he suffered from a complaint common with those who sit too much; for just before his marriage he had to be cut for the stone. There is a portrait at Yester House, near Haddington, dated in 1644, the year of Jamesone's death; it may be the last he painted.

The works ascribed to him are very numerous, although, by some fatality, none of our public collections have contrived to secure one. In those which show clear signs of authenticity the handling is fused, the impasto thin and transparent, the features well drawn, the colour warm but wanting in variety, and the composition stiff and ingenuous. The portrait reproduced on the preceding page is in the collection of Lord Seafield. It shows the painter in his hat, which, says tradition, he was accustomed to retain because Charles I. bid him be covered while he painted the royal features. It is clear that the pictures to which the artist here points are his own, but none have been identified. The large subject is no Andromeda, as some have suggested. It appears to represent an armed man about to kill a child in the presence of a woman who is chained and nude. The child *seems* to be winged; and in that case the picture would be one of those rather ponderous allegories, to whose somewhat doubtful charms the painters of two centuries ago were so prone to succumb.

The most remarkable thing about Jamesone is that he left no successors. I have explained why his apparition does not seem to me so unaccountable as some have thought it; but it is not so easy to understand why his example bore no fruit. Probability, however, points to two explanations. In the first place, everything seems to suggest that Jamesone had resources beside his art; and so that his prosperity would not encourage others to go and do likewise, as it would surely have done had it all been due to his brush. His prices were absurdly small: twenty pounds 'Scots,' or about thirty shillings English, for a half-length during most of his life, and so on in proportion. On such remuneration, even in those days, he could not have lived well and died rich, as he did. Secondly, the civil troubles came just at the moment when their effect upon his example would be greatest. For ten years after his death Scotland knew no peace, and art was impossible for any one who would have had to make his living by it.

After Jamesone the earliest names in Scottish painting are those of the Scougals, John and George, whose activity extended over the years between 1650 and 1690, or thereabouts. Walpole says nothing of them, and little can be gleaned elsewhere. By Scougal the elder, who was much the abler of the two, several portraits are known, with dates about 1670. A portrait of Scougal, bequeathed by a descendant and namesake of his own, hangs in the Scottish National Gallery. In that he holds a ring conspicuously in his hand, which has been pointed to as confirmatory of an old tradition which connects him with James VI. The costume shows, however, that the work belongs to the last half of the seventeenth century, and moreover the style is strongly analogous to that of a portrait by Scougal, dated 1670, in the collection of Lord Rosebery, and of two, dated 1674, at Penicuik House. The younger Scougal was perhaps a pupil of Lely, and his surviving pictures are mostly portraits of ladies in a feeble imitation of that master's manner.

After the Scougals the next name we come to is that of William Aikman, who was born at Cairney, in Forfarshire, in 1682, and studied art in Edinburgh under the naturalised

Spaniard, Sir John Medina. There is a certain weak amiability about Aikman's work; the most interesting example of it, perhaps, is an unfinished picture of the Royal Family, in three compartments, triptych-wise, now in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire. Among his friends he numbered such men as Allan Ramsay the poet, Swift, Pope, and Gay. A portrait of Gay by Aikman hangs at Edinburgh near an autograph portrait of the painter himself. To the Scottish National Portrait Gallery Mr. W. B. Scott has lately given a portrait by Aikman of Allan Ramsay. Several of Aikman's portraits have been engraved, and he has left two etchings. Aikman died in London in 1731, it is said of grief for the loss of his son. The bodies of both were transported to Scotland, and laid in Greyfriars' Churchyard.

About the year 1720 a family of painters named Alexander began to be busy in Edinburgh. The eldest of them—John Alexander—is the only one of whom anything is known. He was the pupil and son-in-law of Alexander Jamesone, a descendant of the great George. Alexander has the credit of having invented a portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, which was often repeated; and while in Rome, where some of his art education was obtained, he etched six not ineffective plates after Raphael.

More important than any of these was the painter to 'Farmer George'—Allan Ramsay. The son of Allan Ramsay the poet and of Christian Ross, he was born at Edinburgh in 1713. His descent from the house of Dalhousie, unlike too many painters' pedigrees, is beyond dispute, for the author of 'The Gentle Shepherd' was grandson to the Laird of Cockpen, a brother of the chief. Edwards tells us, in his 'Anecdotes,' that Ramsay was self-taught, and we first hear of him in a letter from his father to the painter Smibert, which is dated 1736. Part is worth quoting:—

'My son Allan has been pursuing his science since he was a dozen years auld; was with Mr. Hyssen* in London for some time, about two years ago; has since been painting here like a Raphael; sets out for the seat of the Beast beyond the Alps within a month hence, to be away two years. I'm sweer to part with him, but canna stem the current which flows from the advice of his patrons and his own inclination.'

The patronage withheld from the father, says Cunningham, was, in a fit of repentance, bestowed on the son, who left Edinburgh for Rome in June 1736. In Italy he stayed two years, working under Solimena and Imperiali; after which he found his way home to Scotland, where he painted a few portraits, among them an excellent picture of Archibald, Duke of Argyll, which now hangs in the Glasgow Exchange.

The exact period of Ramsay's migration to London is unknown, but about 1764 he painted the portrait to which Reynolds alluded when he wished to show legs with Ramsay's 'Lord Bute!' The story of Ramsay's success, from the cash point of view, is so well known that I need here note only that he was made Painter to the King on the death of the now utterly forgotten Shakelton, and that from 1767, the date of his appointment, to his death, he conducted a sort of picture-mill, from which painted Georges and Charlottes were turned out with profusion and punctuality. Ramsay had six regular assistants: David, called Davie, Martin, a fellow Scot; a woman, Mrs. Black; and four foreigners, Eikhart, Vandycke, Roth, and Vesperies. To these he added in later years a seventh, the well-known Philip Reinagle, the story of whose toil upon fifty pairs of 'Kings and Queens' has been so often told. Ramsay made four journeys to Italy, the last in search of health. He died in 1784, a few days after he had landed at Dover. Ramsay's portraits had the credit of being good likenesses. He was a good draughtsman, a poor colourist, and, as a rule, a picture-maker rather than a painter. To this stricture, however, there are many exceptions. A portrait of his wife, in the Edinburgh Gallery, is delightfully tender and refined, and his own portrait, in the Scottish Portrait Gallery, is also a good piece of work.

* Hans Huyzssing, a Swedish painter, who came to England in 1700, and lived many years with Michael Dahl.

A year later than Ramsay died Alexander Runciman, who had been born fifty years before at Edinburgh, and had gone through some vicissitudes in his comparatively short life. His training in art was acquired partly in Foulis's Academy at Glasgow, partly at Rome, whither he made his way in 1766 with his brother John. Six years later he returned to England, and lodged in Leicester Square with Hogarth's widow. He had won some reputation by a picture of *Nausicaa and Ulysses* sent home from Italy; in which the critics of the time had detected 'the fine drawing of Julio Romano' and 'the deep, juicy lustre of Tintoret!' But his fame was not so great but that Lord Charlemont could speak of him as 'a young gentleman who lodged in widow Hogarth's house,' when there was question of his being employed to engrave the *Lady's Last Stake*. This project came to nothing, however. Judging from the few etchings Runciman has left behind, it could never have come to much. Runciman was better with his tongue than with brush or burin. Among his friends were most of the leading spirits of his native city; so that, when the mastership of the 'Trustees' Academy' fell vacant in 1773, he was appointed to the post. His last twelve years were spent in his native country, where he decorated the great hall at Penicuik with subjects from Ossian, painting between times many easel pictures, and, in the last two years of his life, an altarpiece, which is still in the Episcopal Chapel in the Cowgate. Runciman fell down dead in West Nicolson Street on the 21st of October, 1785. His ordinary style was an exaggeration of Fuseli's, but sometimes he dropped into simplicity and pleasantness. In the Portrait Gallery at Edinburgh hangs a curious canvas, on which he and a fellow-painter—John Brown—are disputing over a passage in 'The Tempest.' It is painted with great vigour, and is better in colour than most of Runciman's work. It is signed 'A. Runciman, 1784,' but Lord Buchan says, in an article in the BEE for the 8th of May, 1793, that both men had a hand in it. John Brown was born in Edinburgh in 1752. After studying for a while under Pavidon, he went, in 1771, to Italy. There he spent much of his time in making pencil sketches from the statues in the Roman galleries. These sketches are now in the South Kensington Museum. In Sicily he made many pen-drawings for Mr. Townley and Sir William Young. On his return to Scotland he again took up the lead-pencil, and is now best known by his portraits in that material. A fine series belongs to the Society of Scottish Antiquaries. Brown died at Leith in 1787, from the effect of sea-sickness on a voyage from London. After his death Lord Monboddo published his 'Letters on the Poetry and Music of the Italian Opera' for the benefit of his widow.

Alexander Runciman's brother, John, who died at Naples in 1768, in his twenty-fifth year, would probably have won a great name had he lived. The pictures he left behind him are few, but they show much inventive power, and a sense of colour which was very rare at the time they were painted. Within the last few months two small pictures by him have been added to the Scottish National Collection. The finer of the two is a *Temptation of Christ*. It is full of a Jerome-Bos-like weirdness of fancy, and in colour has the luminous warmth of a Rubens.

II.

*David Allan, Sir Henry Raeburn, Alexander Nasmyth, George Watson,
Thomson of Duddingston, Andrew Wilson, John Wilson.*

FROM the death of Jamesone to the birth of Raeburn, Scotland produced no painter who was at once able and national. Names are numerous enough — Allan Cunningham quotes some six or eight men, who were all painting in Edinburgh, with more or less success, about the middle of the eighteenth century. But their works have now disappeared. Gavin Hamilton stood upon a different level; but his fame, which even yet has some vitality, did not rest upon his pictures. At present, perhaps, our gratitude is due to him more for the presence of the *Blenheim Madonna* in the National Gallery than for aught else. He excavated a good many of the Townley Marbles, however; and published a fair collection of some forty prints after the great Italian masters. The name of Archibald Skirving, too, is remembered for qualities other than those he put into his pictures. He was a miniaturist of some skill; but his ambition was to be known by his wit. Elaborate jokes that are no jokes are too common in all Bohemias; and Cunningham relates one which exactly suits the man we see in the etching by Geddes. Skirving visited London, and was taken by Cunningham to Chantrey's studio; where, among other things, they found a bust of Edward Bird, the painter. 'Well, and who is that?' asked Skirving. 'It is Bird — Bird of Bristol.' 'Bird! what strange bird is he?' 'He is an eminent painter.' 'Painter! and what does he paint?' 'Ludicrous subjects, sir.' 'Ludicrous subjects! have you sat?' &c. Skirving's right to be thought a wit may be judged from this.

As an artist he had some skill in pastel; and could always point to a residence of some years at Rome as a sort of guarantee of his powers. John Bogle, 'a little lame man, very poor, very proud, and very singular,' whose best production is said to have been a miniature of the Lady Eglinton to whom the 'Gentle Shepherd' is addressed; and David Allan, to whom the foolish name of the 'Scottish Hogarth' was given, were also at work about the same time as Skirving.

David Allan was born at Alloa in 1744. He studied, in the first place, at Foulis's Academy in Glasgow; but in 1764 he was sent to Rome. There he distinguished himself by carrying off the gold medal of the Academy of St. Luke, for a picture of a Corinthian girl tracing the silhouette of her lover (page 10), or the *Invention of Drawing*. In 1777 Allan returned to England, and for three years supported himself by portrait-painting in London. Four drawings of the Roman carnival were aquatinted for him by Paul Sandby, and published in 1781. The same year he settled in Edinburgh. There he painted portraits for a year or two; but in 1786 was chosen to be head of the 'Edinburgh Academy of Arts.' This post he occupied till his death in 1796. To Allan must be given the credit of showing the path afterwards followed by Wilkie. He was the first to paint Scottish national life. The characters of the Scotch and the Dutch have much in common. Both are so richly endowed with vigour, shrewdness, and humour, that no observant artist can fail to find good material in the lower ranks of either. But it was not until he was over forty years of age that Allan left classicality for nature, and he died at fifty-three. The works on which his repute will rest are designs for the illustration of books. The best are those in the 'Gentle Shepherd,' which are engraved as well as drawn by himself. To his mastership of the Academy may be

traced a good deal that afterwards became characteristic of the Scottish School. David Allan's autograph portrait is in the Scottish National Gallery.

In my first chapter I passed the name of David Martin, the assistant of Ramsay, without remark. Now, however, I must say a word or two about him, because, towards the end of the century, he was the best employed painter in Scotland. He became, too, for a time, the competitor of Raeburn, playing 'Romney to his 'Reynolds.' Martin was twenty years the elder of the pair; he was born in 1736, and, like his rival, he improved his position by marrying a woman of property. His career in Edinburgh was interrupted by a sojourn in



THE ORIGIN OF PAINTING. BY D. ALLAN.
(From the picture in the Scottish National Gallery.)

London about 1779; but he returned to his native place about 1782, and lived there till his death, which took place in 1798. Martin was a good engraver; his best plate is one in line from his own full-length portrait of Lord Mansfield. An autograph portrait of himself is in the Scottish National Gallery. He is sometimes called the master of Raeburn, but the teaching he gave was slight enough, as we shall see.

Henry Raeburn was born at Stockbridge, then a pretty suburb of Edinburgh, on the 4th of March, 1756. His family is said to have come from the Border. The painter himself used to say, only half in fun, that he was 'Raeburn of that ilk,' and, as a fact, there is a hill farm in Annandale called Raeburn, from which the name may well have been derived. The painter's head confirms the notion of his Border descent. It has all the massiveness, especially about the brows and throat, which is so remarkable in the people who live on 'the

Marches.' That this conformation descends, as some believe, from the legions which lay for centuries along the Roman wall, I cannot venture to say, but that it goes, as a rule, with a considerable artistic faculty, is certain. Whether the painter was one of the Raeburns of Raeburn or not, would now be as difficult to decide as it has been to trace out the kinship of Michelangelo with the lords of Canossa. We must be content with the knowledge that his father Robert was a successful citizen, and his mother, Ann Elder, a lawful wife. Both parents died when their son Henry was about six. Thenceforth he had to look for protection to friends and to his brother William, his elder by a dozen years. His schooling was done at Heriot's Hospital, which he left at fifteen, having distinguished himself only by the excellent drawings he made on his slate when the master was not looking. The next thing to do was to select a profession. Raeburn chose to be a goldsmith. In the Italy of the fifteenth century such a choice would have led naturally to the easel, but in our sharply divided trades it meant, of course, so much time taken from his true probation. It has been sometimes asserted that art sprang up in him like weeds in a garden, without invitation or help. It has even been declared that he attracted notice by his miniatures before he had ever seen a picture. Such an assertion is absurd. There were plenty of pictures in Edinburgh a hundred years ago, and plenty of bookshops with prints in their windows. It must then have been as impossible for an intelligent boy to grow almost to manhood without seeing paintings and other works of art as it is to-day. Raeburn's first miniatures were produced while he was still a goldsmith. Some were seen by his master, a Mr. Gilliland, who desecrated talent enough in them to induce him to take the lad to David Martin. Martin received him kindly enough, but his help seems to have been confined to the loan of pictures to copy. Cunningham says positively that he refused to tell Raeburn anything about the use of colour, or to help him ever so little over the drudgery of beginning. Raeburn finally broke with Martin, according to the same authority, because the latter falsely accused him of selling one of the copies he had made from the elder man's work.

Early in life Raeburn became the close friend of John Clerk, afterwards Lord Eldin. Clerk was a bit of an artist himself, and both were very poor. Of their poverty a story is told by Cunningham which will bear repeating. On one occasion when the 'bawbee' was with Clerk, Raeburn was invited to dine with his friend. The two went into the young advocate's lodgings together, and found the landlady laying the table with two plates, on one of which three herrings, and on the other three potatoes, reposed. 'An' is this a'?' shouted John. 'Ay, it's a.' 'A! didn't a tell ye, wumman, that a gentleman was to dine wi' me, and that ye were to get six herrin' and six potatoes?' Out of this condition, however, both Clerk and Raeburn soon rose. The story of Raeburn's marriage, too, is curious. When he was in his twenty-second year, a young lady presented herself one day at his studio, and demanded that he should paint her portrait. He recognised her as having crossed his path on some sketching excursion, but otherwise she was a stranger. He painted her, however, and a month later he married her. She must have been older than he, for she was the widow of a Count Leslie, to whom she had borne several children. Her maiden name was Edgar, and she brought her husband a fortune which at once put him above care. Soon after his marriage Raeburn went to London, where he was introduced to Sir Joshua, who advised him to go to Rome and worship Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. The President accompanied his advice with the offer of help in money. This offer his possession of a rich wife enabled Raeburn to decline. At Rome, where he stayed two years, he met Gavin Hamilton and studied under Byers, bringing away from the latter a habit which was stranger then than now, that of painting nothing without having the object before him. In 1787 he was back in Edinburgh, and painting all comers at a studio in George Street.

Before this time David Martin had returned a widower from London, and had re-established himself at the head of Scottish art. His cold conventionalities were flowing from his easel in a stream that was to dwindle sadly at the touch of Raeburn's fire. He

had not long heard of the latter's return before patrons began to pass him for his rival. In vain he pretended to believe that 'the lad in George Street painted better before he went to Rome.' The public was too strong for him. For some years he struggled on, but at last he abandoned the fight and left his young conqueror to rule alone.

For thirty years after this Raeburn painted hard and lived one of the easiest of lives. His habits are thus described by Cunningham :—

'He was now in his thirty-first year, had fine health, high spirits, a gallery worthy of being seen by people of rank and taste; and, what was not less pleasant, the bliss of domestic tranquillity. Though his painting-rooms were in George Street, his dwelling-house was at St. Bernard's, near Stockbridge, overlooking the Water of Leith, a romantic place. The movements of the artist were as regular as those of a clock. He rose at seven during summer, took breakfast about eight with his wife and children, walked into George Street, and was ready for a sitter by nine; and of sitters he generally had, for many years, not fewer than three or four a-day. To these he gave an hour and a half each. He seldom kept a sitter more than two hours, unless the person happened—and that was often the case—to be gifted with more than common talents. He then felt himself happy, and never failed to detain the one client till the arrival of another intimated that he must be gone. For a head size he generally required four or five sittings; and he preferred painting the head and hands to any other part of the body, assigning as a reason that they required least consideration. A fold of drapery, or the natural ease which the casting of a mantle over the shoulder demanded, occasioned him more perplexing study than a head full of thought and imagination. Such was the intuition with which he penetrated at once to the mind, that the first sitting rarely came to a close without his having seized strongly on the character and disposition of the individual. He never drew in his heads, or, indeed, any part of the body, with chalk—a system pursued successfully by Lawrence—but began with the brush at once. The forehead, chin, nose, and mouth, were his first touches. He always painted standing, and never used a stick for resting his hand on; for such was his accurateness of eye and steadiness of nerve that he could introduce the most delicate touches, or the utmost mechanical regularity of line, without aid or other contrivance than fair, off-hand dexterity. He remained in his painting-room till a little after five o'clock, when he walked home, and dined at six.'

Such a system of steady work could not fail to produce an *œuvre* and a good income. Cunningham complains that the artist kept no account of his expenditure and no list of his sitters; but awkward as that may make things for his biographer, it betrays a generosity in Raeburn which it warms one to recognise. He said he enjoyed life too much to care for either money or fame. He was happy with the work of the day, and declared portrait-painting to be the most delightful thing in the world. Like Northcote, perhaps, he would have been content to pass eternity in his studio, asking nothing better than to hold his palette on his thumb and to swing his brush until the end of time!

Raeburn's forty years of activity coincided with the great days of Edinburgh. Burns was in the capital, and had just leapt into fame when the painter returned from Rome. But the poet, almost alone among then famous Scotchmen, never sat to Raeburn, who is said, however, to have worked in later years on the portrait by Alexander Nasmyth, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery, in London. But Raeburn's list of sitters is hardly less exhaustive for the Scotland of his day than Sir Joshua's for the England of a generation earlier. The three hundred and twenty-five portraits which were collected in the Galleries of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1876 made up between them a worthy picture of the people who gave Edinburgh its best claim to be called 'The Northern Athens.' Blair, Kames, Mackenzie, Robertson, Hume, Home, Monboddo, Boswell, Adam Smith, Braxfield, Wilson, Hutton, Ferguson, Dugald Stewart, Scott, Jeffrey, Henry Erskine, Clerk of Eldin, and many more were there. It is doubtful whether any other man ever so completely recorded the society in which he moved. Reynolds enjoyed a success which to that of Raeburn was much what London is to Edinburgh, but even in Sir Joshua's lists there are gaps. Many refused to bow the knee to the President, and preferred to find their way to Pall Mall or Cavendish Square. Raeburn, for a great part of his life, had the field to himself.

The gathering of his works brought together in 1876 probably amounted to about half his total production. Three hundred and twenty-five pictures were hung. Of these a few were miniatures, and a few more not really by the hand to which they were ascribed. Perhaps if we guess the total number of Raeburn's portraits at about six hundred, we shall not be far wrong. This total, considerable as it is, falls far short of the two thousand or more turned out by Reynolds. But then Sir Henry was a slower and more conscientious worker than Sir Joshua. He did more of his work himself; he pondered his pictures more, so far at least as design was concerned, than Reynolds; and, judging from their state, he must have been vastly more careful about the methods and materials he used. His most active time was about the year 1810. He had then been settled for about twelve years in the new house he had built for himself in York Place, with studios on the ground-floor and a gallery above. His sitters had reached the limit of his powers; and tempted partly by



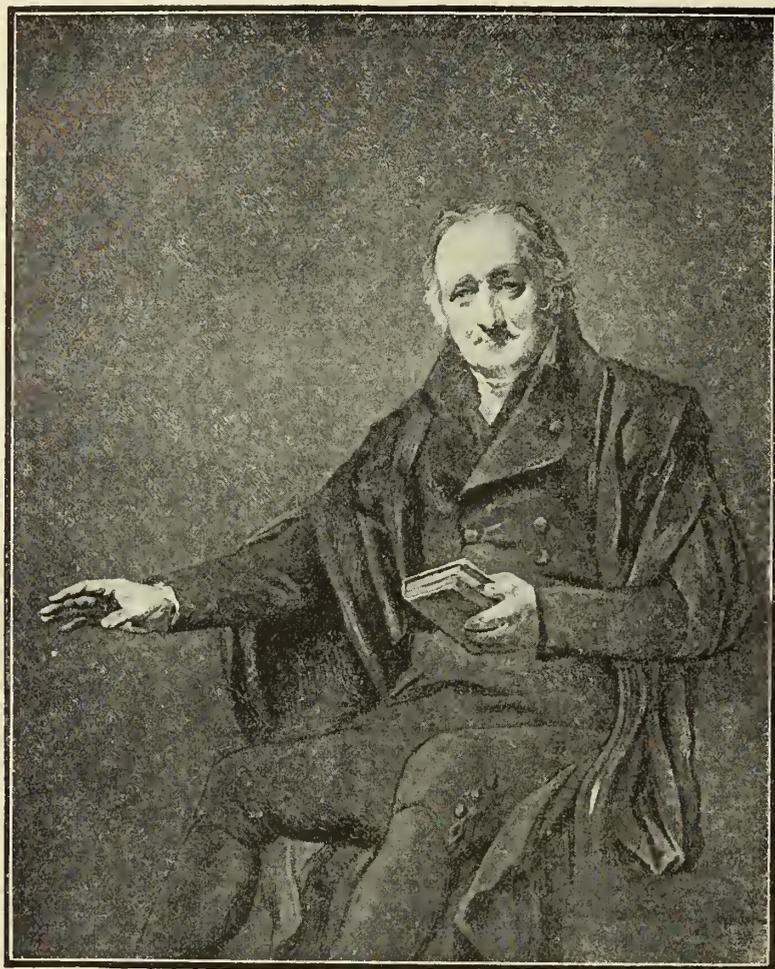
PORTRAIT OF THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALISON, LL.B., F.R.S.
BY RAEBURN.

the ease with which he added to his wealth, partly by the opportunity given by the building of the New Town of Edinburgh, he had entered upon a building speculation on his land at Stockbridge. From this, more fortunate than most, he took no harm but a love for law; and even from the charms of the Parliament House his natural acuteness brought him off scatheless.

In 1814 Raeburn was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and twelve months later a full R.A. A few years before he had it apparently in mind to migrate to London; from which intention he was perhaps dissuaded by the counsels of Sir Thomas Lawrence. In 1822 George IV. paid his famous visit to Scotland, and Mr. Raeburn became 'Sir Henry,' being appointed soon afterwards the King's 'Limner and Painter in Scotland.' But this preferment came almost too late for his knowledge; for on the very day it was announced he took to his bed, and a week later, on the 8th of July, 1823, he died.

It is not unlikely that Raeburn would have risen into the first rank of artists had the conditions been more favourable. His best portraits show a unity and coherence of conception, combined with a free certainty of handling, that is only to be excelled in the work of two or three very famous men. His colour is of the negative kind. It gives neither pain

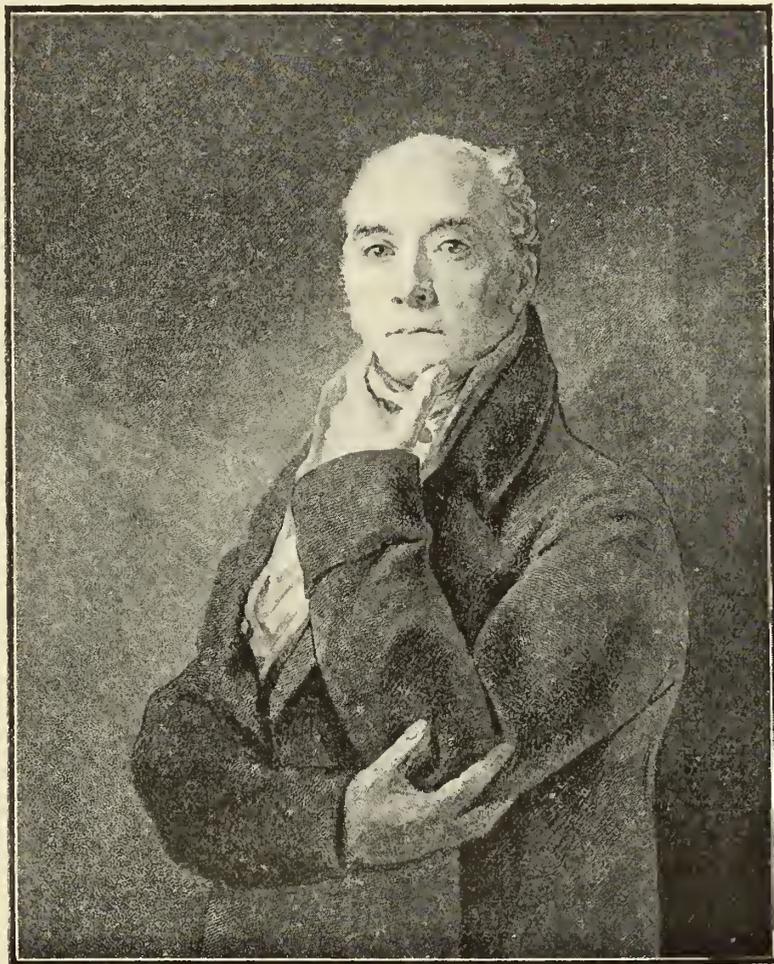
nor much active pleasure. Now and then it shows a tendency to heat, but as a rule it is simply quiescent. His skill as a harmonist is shown, however, when he had something trying to do. The portrait of Nathaniel Spens, in the Archers' Hall at Edinburgh, is an instance of this. To paint tartan at all is difficult; but when the tartan is a *criant* green and spread smoothly over the whole stature of an athletic archer of six feet or more, the task becomes stupendous. And yet Raeburn triumphed. The picture was at Burlington House a few years ago, and excited enthusiasm among English painters. The secret of its success lies in its simplicity,—a simplicity won by careful thought, by freedom from discord



PORTRAIT OF DR. ALEXANDER ADAM. BY RAEBURN.
(From the picture in the Scottish National Gallery.)

in colour, and by breadth and finality in execution. Perhaps a still finer example of the same sort of skill is the full-length portrait of Colonel Alastair Macdonnell of Glengarry, which at present hangs, as a loan, in the Scottish National Gallery. Breadth and simplicity of lighting and handling could not easily be carried farther, and the warm tints of the tartan gave an opportunity for a richer scheme of colour than that in the picture at Archers' Hall. Raeburn's notion of colour was that of a modern Frenchman. Quality of tint he did not feel much for; truth of value and harmony he aimed at. In his letters from Madrid, Wilkie continually mentions the handling of Velasquez as reminding him of Raeburn; and those who have lately been admiring the Duke of Wellington's magnificent *Innocent X.* at the Old Masters will understand what he meant. The Velasquez has a force and completeness far beyond that of Raeburn's work at its best. It was painted by a man who had grown up among the great Schools; who lived with Titians and Tintoretto,

and had about him crowds of painters, who, slight as their talents may seem in comparison with his, sufficed at least to drive him to perfect his powers. Raeburn, on the other hand, when his short visit to Italy had faded in his memory, had no person or thing to 'make a pace' for him. His fine taste compelled him to do work that was good; but its stimulus was not enough to make a man without ambition develop his resources to the full. His pictures seldom give an opening for positive criticism. So far as they go, they come near perfection. But the range of his chiaroscuro is too short; his shadows and his high lights are too near each other, which leads to a want of depth and roundness in his



PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF. BY RAEBURN.

modelling, and generally to a want of force. This comes partly, no doubt, from his habit of painting without a rest for his hand. That would lead him to simplify handling as far as possible and to adopt that system of large, square brush-strokes which is more conspicuous with him than with any other painter. With Raeburn these strokes are apt to be too large, so that his breadth occasionally degenerates almost into emptiness, or at least into what would be emptiness but for the consummate knowledge shown in what *is* given. An instance of this is to be seen in the portrait of Francis Horner, now at Bethnal Green. Splendid work up to a certain point, it wants to be carried farther. I do not say this because I have any hankering after 'finish,' but because I can see that here the painter's own conception would profit by more force and definition.

The *Lord Newton*, here reproduced from Charles Turner's mezzotint, is one of the finest heads Raeburn ever painted. The original picture is now in the Scottish National

Gallery, where it has for companion the half-length of Dr. Alexander Adam. Newton was a Lord of Session from 1806 to 1811. He was alike famous as a *bon-vivant* and mighty drinker and as a 'strong judge.' Stories, too, are told of the skill with which he killed time on the bench. On one occasion a long-winded advocate, seeing him buried in slumber, sat down, saying to his neighbour, 'I may as well save my breath: my lord is asleep.' 'Asleep, am I? Ah, ye'll find that out presently,' growled out Newton, and proceeded to deliver a trenchant judgment against the complaining counsel. His portrait suffers from the ugly line made by the Scottish substitute for bands. The gown is red, a colour Raeburn never managed very well; he got it, as a rule, too grey, chalky, and neutral. But the dominance of the head, with its combination of judgment and fine humour, makes up for more than such a fault as that. Dr. Adam's portrait is also in the Edinburgh Gallery. It was originally painted for the High School, of which Adam was Rector from 1768 to 1809. No better example could be named, perhaps, of the painter's treatment of the tenderness of age. Near the portrait of Adam hangs one of a lady, Mrs. Kennedy of Dunure, in which red, green, and white, all three very positive, are almost the only tints. The result might have been very disagreeable, but is not. A bust of John Wauchope, on the same wall, is notable for being much more elaborately finished than usual. The handling is carefully fused, and wants life. The picture, by its general aspect and the costume of the sitter, belongs to Raeburn's last years. The well-known portrait of Neil Gow, the violinist, has lately been bought for the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and, finally, I may name, as a first-rate example of Raeburn's work, the full-length of Admiral Lord Duncan, in the Trinity House at Leith.

Alexander Nasmyth was two years younger than Raeburn. He was born in Edinburgh in 1758. After working for a time under Runciman, he betook himself to London, to the studio of Allan Ramsay. Next he went to Italy, where he stayed for some years, finally establishing himself in Edinburgh as a portrait-painter. His portrait of Burns has already been alluded to. It was painted in 1787, from sittings given by the poet, and is now in the Scottish National Gallery. Two replicas of it were made by Nasmyth. One of these is at Bethnal Green. It was originally painted for George Thomson, the friend for whom so many of Burns's finest songs were written. The second copy belongs to Mr. Cathcart, of Auchendrane. On the back of the Edinburgh picture Burns's son wrote a sort of certificate of originality, which still remains there. On Mr. Cathcart's replica Nasmyth himself wrote this:

ROBERT BURNS,

Painted by Alexr. Nasmyth, being one of three pictures painted by him.

The original Picture,

Painted in Edinr. in 1787, is now in the possession of Mrs. Burns, Dumfries.

The second is in the possession of Mr. G. Thomson, Edinr.

And this picture in the possession of E. Cathcart, Esq.,

Edinr., 1824.

A. N. 1824.

The original picture was engraved in stipple by John Beugo, for the Edinburgh edition of the poems, in 1787. Burns sat to Beugo, and the plate had the reputation of being even a better likeness than Nasmyth's picture. Nasmyth also painted a small full-length of Burns for his own pleasure, which is now on loan in the gallery at Edinburgh. A note attached to it records Mr. James Nasmyth's recollection that it was painted about 1827 or 1828.

Long before this, however, Alexander Nasmyth had more or less abandoned portrait-painting for landscape. His landscapes, which are very numerous in Scotland, are all more or less topographical. They betray familiarity with the Dutch school, especially with Hobbema, Ruysdael, and Wynants. Their weakness lies in a want of sympathy with colour and an almost total absence of the faculty for composition. When the painter has



happened to choose a good subject, and set up his easel on the right spot, he has produced a picture. But as a rule his work has none of the coherence, significance, and balance, in which real art consists. No canvas of his, numerous as they are, has yet found its way into a public gallery. His pictures are mostly in Scottish private collections; but a landscape by his son Patrick, which has lately been hung in the National Gallery, is so like the elder man's work that it may be used as an example. Alexander had less crispness of handling than we see here; his chiaroscuro had less force, and his colour much more monotony. But this waterfall by his son (No. 1177 in the catalogue) will at least give a better idea of his character as an artist than words of mine. In the last half of his life Nasmyth was much engaged in landscape-gardening, and also on scenery for the Glasgow Theatre. He died at York Place, Edinburgh, on April 10th, 1840, at the age of eighty-two. Besides the painter, Patrick, to whom we shall have to refer later, he had another son, James, the distinguished engineer, who still lives.

The most distinguished of Nasmyth's many pupils was his son; but among the rest, George Watson, who became the first President of the Royal Scottish Academy, must not be forgotten. His teaching by Nasmyth did not last long, for at the age of eighteen he entered Sir Joshua's studio in London, where he worked for two years. About 1790 he settled in Edinburgh, where he played second fiddle to Raeburn. For some years he presided over the associated artists of Scotland, and then on the foundation of the Academy in 1830, he was elected the first P.R.S.A. In the Edinburgh Gallery there is a portrait of Archibald Skirving by him, and another of himself. Watson died in 1837. His son, William Smellie Watson, who died in 1874, and enjoyed a considerable repute as a painter of portraits, was for some years assistant to Wilkie. He was a foundation member of the Scottish Academy.

John Syme, who was born in Edinburgh in 1795, and educated at the Trustees' Academy, was the assistant of Raeburn. After his employer's death he completed several of his unfinished pictures, and soon won a good practice for himself. His work is simple, solid, and straightforward. A good example of it hangs in the Edinburgh Gallery. Syme died in 1861.

So far Scottish art had been mainly portrait-painting. David Allan, no doubt, had taken the life about him for his subject, and Nasmyth had turned to landscape; but excellence had only been reached by those whose theme had been humanity. Towards the end of the century, however, several men were born who were to add the praise of landscape to their national art. None of these were to rise, indeed, into the first rank, or near it; but a few among them were at least to display a real love for nature, and a real artistic individuality. Chief among these was the Rev. John Thomson, the well-known minister of Duddingston. Thomson was born in the manse of Dailly, Ayrshire, on the 1st of September, 1778. He succeeded his father at Dailly; but in 1805 migrated to Edinburgh, on his presentation to the parish of Duddingston, at the foot of Arthur's Seat. There he made congenial friends; and for thirty-five years was the centre of a society which he charmed by many talents. He was a fine musician, and in his painting gave evidence of a truer gift for landscape than any other Scotsman of his time. His fame has suffered here through the presence in the National Gallery of an atrocious example of his work. Like all amateurs he was very uncertain. Now he would paint a landscape almost worthy of Richard Wilson, and this he would follow up with a performance feeble enough for a school-girl. His models seem to have been Gaspar Poussin, Claude, and Wilson. As a colourist he was conventional; but he often achieved a silvery harmony which is agreeable. Unlike most amateurs, he succeeded best when he tried least. Some of his more sketchy pictures, in which the colour is put on freely, with a dexterity and sympathy almost like Morland's, hint at a mastery which is to be found in none of his more ambitious pictures. A good instance of this was to be seen last year in a small picture lent to the Old Masters by Lord Wemyss. Of his more elaborate pieces

there is a good example in the Edinburgh Gallery. It is an *Aberlady Bay*. Thomson was often pressed to join artistic societies, but he steadily refused, believing it inconsistent with his cloth. When the Scottish Academy was founded, he consented, however, to his election as an Honorary Member. He was one of Scott's wide circle of friends; and, indeed, no Scotsman of note of the time was a stranger to the manse at Duddingston. There Thomson died on the 20th of October, 1840.

Andrew Wilson was two years junior to Thomson. He was born in Edinburgh in 1780. At an early age he became a pupil of Nasmyth, and, in 1817, entered the schools of the Royal Academy. While still young he went to Italy, where he soon began to collect pictures by the old masters. He lived for three years at Genoa, and there acquired over fifty important pictures, among them a famous Rubens, the *Elevation of the Brazen Serpent*, now in the National Gallery. It was at Genoa that he was presented to Napoleon. Having been elected a member of the Ligurian Academy, he had in that capacity to attend



LANDSCAPE. BY ANDREW WILSON. (*British Museum.*)

Bonaparte when he visited the Society's exhibition. Bonaparte paused before Wilson's picture, when an envious colleague whispered that the painter was English. 'Le Talent n'a pas de pays,' was the General's swift rebuke. Coming home in 1805, he painted much in water-colour, exhibited occasionally at the Academy, and for a short period held a professorship at Sandhurst. In 1818 he returned to Edinburgh, on his appointment as Master of the Trustees' Academy. This post he only held for eight years. In 1826 he carried himself and his household gods to Italy, where he remained until 1847. In that year he revisited Scotland, and died there twelve months later. Wilson's pictures are distinguished by the refinement of their design and composition. His colour was delicate but conventional, and he had little sense of air. The reproduction on this page is from a drawing in the British Museum.

John, or 'Jock,' Wilson, as he was commonly called, was another pupil of Alexander Nasmyth. He was born at Ayr on the 13th August, 1774. He was apprenticed when a boy to a house-painter at Edinburgh, but entered Nasmyth's studio on the completion of his term. He afterwards settled for a time at Montrose, where he painted and taught drawing. In 1798 he came to London, and was engaged as scene-painter at Astley's. In 1807 he exhibited for the first time at the Academy, and in 1810 he married. In 1826 he won a prize of 100 guineas from the British Institution for a sketch of the *Battle of*

Trafalgar. In 1824 he had become a foundation member of the Society of British Artists, and for the rest of his life he was a constant contributor to its shows. He also exhibited regularly with the Royal Scottish Academy, of which he was elected an honorary member. He died on the 29th of April, 1855. At the present moment his very name seems to be forgotten, but there is much in his art to give it renewed vitality when the day comes for his pictures to be better known. The South Kensington Museum has lately acquired a fair example, which seems to have suffered, however, from some change of pigment in the sky. It is a shore piece; horses and carts are unloading a beached vessel under a lowering sky. The scene appears to be the coast between Folkestone and Shornecliffe, with an old martello tower, which has, I fancy, been lately demolished. It is a well-conceived and vigorously painted picture, a little red and lurid in colour, but capitally composed. 'Jock' Wilson had gifts beyond his art. Endowed with a keen observation and a wonderful memory, he had great conversational powers, and in his last years at Folkestone he was never without a circle of delighted listeners.

III.

*Alexander Carse, William Home Lizars, Walter Geikie,
Sir David Wilkie.*

ALL the four men whose names I have set at the head of the present chapter were, in a broad sense, disciples of David Allan. Alexander Carse, called 'Old Carse,' was born about 1780, rather sooner, perhaps, than later, for he had already won a reputation by 1806, when the first exhibition of modern pictures was held in Edinburgh. His work is full of humour and character. In those respects he might be called the Scottish Brouwer, were such comparisons desirable. As a painter, however, he was rather coarse and heavy-handed. He exhibited with the Scottish Academy down to 1836, and is supposed to have died soon after. Redgrave, in his Dictionary, gives the initial of his Christian name as W., which seems to be a mistake. There is now a fair example of Carse in the National Gallery at Edinburgh.

William Home Lizars was born at Edinburgh in 1788. He was the eldest son of the engraver, Daniel Lizars, to whom he was apprenticed in 1802. His father, however, placed him as a student with the famous John Graham, Master of the Trustees' Academy, where for a time he was a fellow-pupil with Wilkie. In 1812 Lizars sent to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy a *Reading of the Will* and a *Scotch Wedding*. These were hung on the line, and roused much interest in the young artist, for whom a brilliant career was foretold. Unfortunately Daniel Lizars died in the course of the same year, and his son was compelled to transfer his attention to the business of engraving and copper-plate printing. Being a man of great energy and force of character, his assistance was sought at the foundation of the Scottish Academy in 1826, although he had then long given up the practice of his art. From 1826 to 1830, when he resigned, he was an Associate engraver. Lizars died at Jedburgh in 1859. His two chief works—those mentioned above—were given to the National Gallery of Scotland by his widow. Though rather hot and red in colour, they are full of freedom and character, and are excellently composed.

Walter Geikie, too, was a native of Edinburgh, where he was born in 1795. He received his training at the Trustees' Academy, under Graham, and commenced to exhibit in 1815. In 1831 he was elected an Associate, and, in 1834, a full Member, of the Scottish Academy. In 1833 he published a series of etchings, the subjects taken from Scottish life and scenery. Geikie was a deaf-mute, and weakly in health withal; but he was cheerful, and fond of society. His death took place in 1837. His etchings are coarse but vigorous, and look as if he had taken the *Genre* of Rembrandt for his models. The single picture by him at Edinburgh is also very Dutch in character.

In strict chronology, Wilkie should have come before either Lizars or Geikie, for he was born in 1785. But his work has closer attachments to our time than theirs, and for other reasons it was better to take him out of his order. And as one thing leads to another, I must here say a word upon the above-mentioned John Graham, whose chief distinction it was to have been Wilkie's master. Born as early as 1754, Graham had, in 1798, been named director of the Trustees' Academy, and had been content to carry on the work begun so well by David Allan. Himself a mediocre painter, he will be remembered mainly by the success which attended the school under his supervision. Besides Wilkie, he

numbered among his pupils Sir William Allan, the Burnets, and Sir John Watson Gordon. Of Graham's own work, the Scottish National Gallery possesses an example in bad condition. His death took place in 1817.

Graham's great pupil was born at Cults, in Fife, in 1785. His father, also a David Wilkie and minister of the parish, was the son of one John Wilkie, of Ratho-Byres, in Midlothian. The painter, who had the real Scottish love of pedigree, used to be fond in after-life of discussing the family ramifications. At his death he left a fragment of autobiography, and there we find him lamenting that he cannot 'count kindred' with one John Wilkie of Uphall, a minister, who, when desired by the Presbytery to preach against the sin of witchcraft, let off instead a sermon against the folly of believing in it, and that thirty years before the last witch was burnt in Scotland! No wonder, as Mrs. Heaton exclaims, Sir David wished to establish some connexion between himself and such a brave old Puritan!

It may here be as well to quote part of the autobiographical fragment I have alluded to:—

'I am,' says the painter, 'the third son of the Rev. David Wilkie and of Isabella Lister, his wife, a native of the district. My father came from the county of Midlothian, and from a neighbourhood often mentioned, which, like the ancient Hebron, had a halo and interest about it which no other place could possess. He was a native of Ratho-Byres, a small property which had been in possession of our family for 400 years, until, as he used to tell us, by the imprudence of his ancestors, it had passed to a younger branch of the same family . . . and was held by his father, John Wilkie, only as its tenant and cultivator. Of the singular worth and good qualities of that excellent person, my grandfather, I have heard much and from many persons. After his death, the family mansion, an humble structure, was allowed to sink to decay; but from a feeling of respect to his own ancestry, the proprietor, James Wilkie of Gilchristown, permitted a gable-end, containing the chimney-corner, where my grandfather loved to entertain his friends, to remain, which I remember a grey ruin, a venerable landmark of other years. . . . In the neighbourhood of Ratho reside other families of my name: Matthew Wilkie, of Bonnington, and William Wilkie, of Ormiston Hill, extensive proprietors of land, are counted our relations, and claim descent from the same stock. . . . The Rev. William Wilkie, minister of Ratho, (was) author of the "Epigoniad," a poem on the Theban war, which in language, though reminding us too much of Pope, almost his contemporary, exhibits such facility of composition, such readiness of imagery, and such power of expression, as induced Hume . . . to call him the Scottish Homer.'

Here the memoir closes. It may be supplemented with the two following extracts from the Journal of David *père*:—

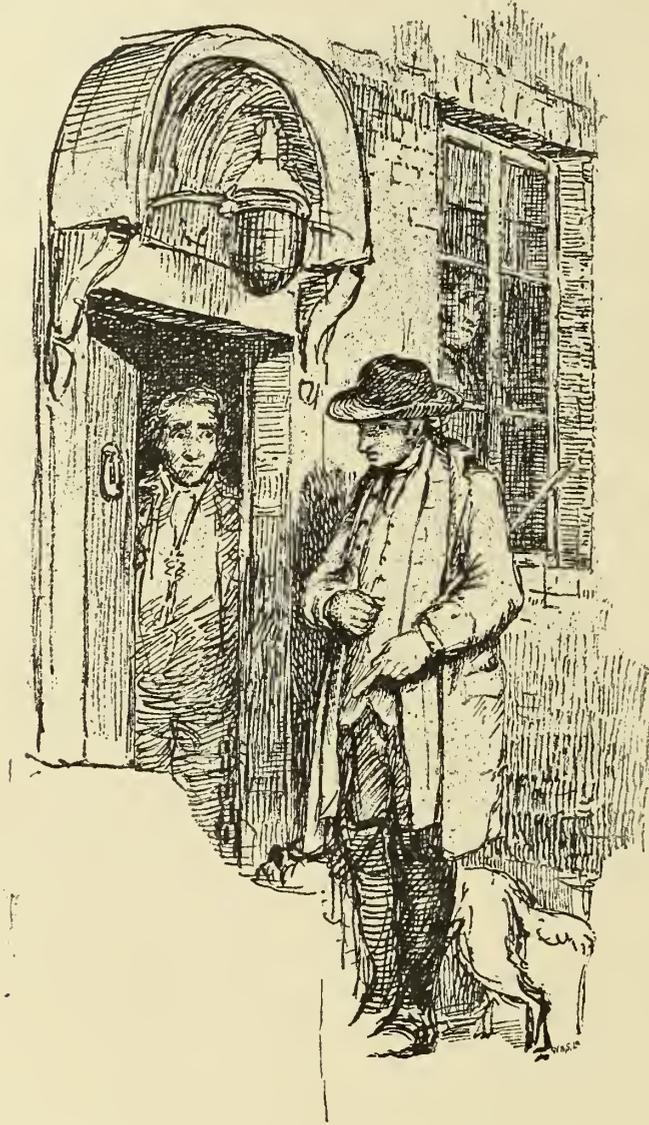
'1781. October 4.—Was this day married to Miss Isabella Lister, daughter to Mr. James Lister, farmer, of Pitlessie Mill.

'1785. November 18.—This day, about five in the evening, Bell was delivered of a son, who, on December 4th, was baptized by the name of David after myself.'

Bell was the minister's third wife, and David her third son. As soon as he could crawl, the boy commenced to draw. This feat he could perform before he could read, or even talk properly. Once, while still a 'wee bit bairn,' his mother asked him what he was after with a bit of chalk on the floor, to which he answered, 'Making bonnie Lady Gonie;' and we are told that his scribble really gave some hint of a certain Lady Balgonie, whose charms had made an impression on his baby heart. At Pitlessie school the same fever for drawing possessed him, and, canny Scot as he was, it is said that when he grew to the mature age of ten or so, he used to make his school-fellows pay with marbles, pencils, bits of string, and other mysterious treasures of boyhood, for the libels he made on their features.

With such a lad there was clearly but one thing to do, and his father deserves credit for the promptness with which he bowed to the inevitable. At the age of fourteen young David was sent to Edinburgh to try for the Trustees' Academy. He carried with him an introduction from Lord Leven to Mr. George Thomson, the secretary, but in spite of that

admission was for a time refused. Thereupon Lord Leven was called in to smooth obstacles away, and before long his young *protégé* was winning prizes from the Trustees. Judging, however, from the life-size studies Wilkie produced in later years, his work as a student must have been notable for character rather than precision. Somewhere in the world there must be a sketch for *Diana and Calisto*, which gained a premium of ten pounds, and was afterwards sold for about fifty. The theme was a strange one for Wilkie.



SKETCH FOR 'NOT AT HOME.' BY SIR DAVID WILKIE.

In 1804 Wilkie returned to Cults, and set to work to compose his *Pitlessie Fair*. Here he had a subject entirely to his taste, and, what is more, to his powers. A crowd of country folk are come together partly for business, partly for enjoyment; most, if not all, are portraits, and every incident is just what might occur at such a time and place. Technically the work reminds one strangely of such Dutchmen as J. M. Molenaer. The characterisation is a little rude and broad; the handling free, wonderfully so for a boy; the colour a little hot and red. On the whole, it is an extraordinary production for a lad of eighteen.* During this year, 1804, Wilkie painted a number of portraits besides the *Fair*, and it was

* *Pitlessie Fair* still belongs to the family of Mr. Kinnear, of Kinloch, who bought it from the painter. Two years ago it was lent for a time to the Scottish National Gallery, where I saw it.

no doubt on the strength of what they added to the price of the latter that he determined to set out for London. In May, 1805, he made the journey, and a few months afterwards we find Jackson writing to Haydon, who, like himself, was a student at Somerset House, that a raw, tall, pale, queer Scotchman had come, 'an odd fellow, but there is something in him; he is called Wilkie.' Haydon's wrong-headed jealousy bestirred itself against the new importation even before he was seen, but ere long we find that he and Jackson were the young Scot's chief friends.

On his arrival Wilkie took lodgings at 8 Norton Street, Portland Road, breakfasting at home but dining at a 'thirteen-penny ordinary,' where he had the chance of talking every tongue but his own. The funds saved at Cults did not last him long, but he soon contrived to sell a few studies and a small picture called *The Village Recruit*, which he had painted in Scotland. Anent this, Cunningham tells a significant story of its attracting the eye of a rich but timid connoisseur, who passed the shop where it was exposed for sale. Asking the price, he was told six guineas; but, fearful perhaps for his repute, he determined to consult Cunningham before he risked his money. 'Buy it by all means,' said the critic; 'stake that much on your taste.' But meanwhile a bolder 'patron' had looked into the same window,



SKETCH FOR A GROUP IN 'THE READING OF A WILL.' BY SIR DAVID WILKIE.

and when Cunningham's friend returned the picture was gone. The poverty which attended Wilkie's early years in London seems to have been his own fault. The prices he named for his pictures were absurdly small. Again and again the cheques he received were larger than he asked, marking at least the buyers' sense that they had obtained too much for their money. This diffidence was mainly constitutional, but it may have been partly due to an unfortunate hitch in the selling of his *Village Politicians*. The study was shown to Lord Mansfield, who asked what would be the price for the finished work. Wilkie replied, 'Fifteen guineas,' to which the Earl made no answer. Wilkie proceeded, however, to paint the subject, trusting to find a buyer even if it did not please him who had admired the sketch. The picture went to the Academy of 1806, and its maker awoke to find himself famous. Thereupon Lord Mansfield claimed it at the price of fifteen guineas. To this, of course, Wilkie demurred; the patron had not committed himself, and so the picture had been finished at the painter's risk, who therefore had the right to ask what he chose. In the end Mansfield gave him thirty guineas.

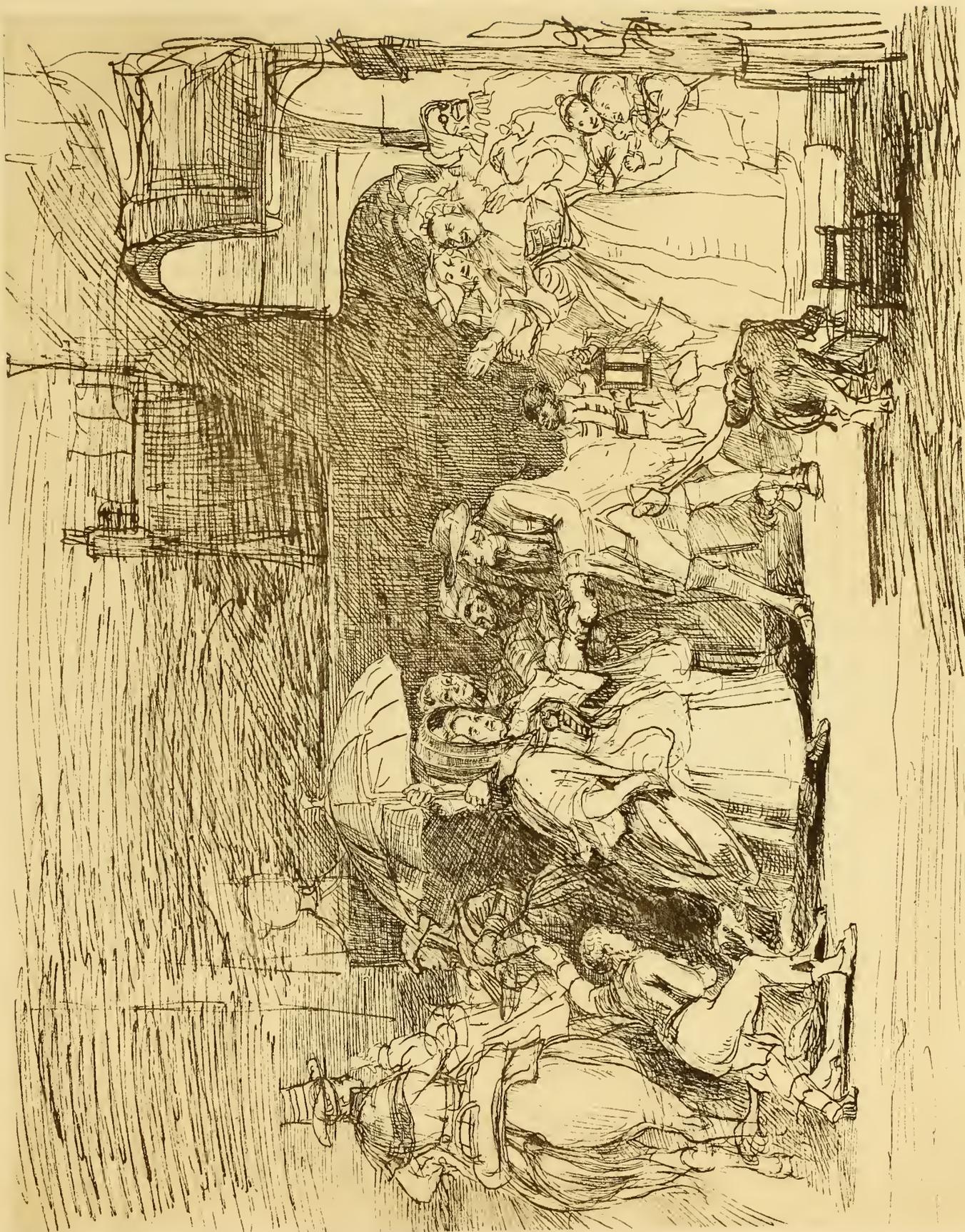
The Village Politicians was succeeded by *The Blind Fiddler*, and that by *Alfred in the Neatherd's Cottage*, *The Card Players*, and *The Rent Day*. The *Alfred* is classed, perhaps with justice, among Wilkie's failures. It is clear, of course, why such a scene was chosen by Wilkie, but nevertheless it was an error of judgment. A king in any efficient disguise is not a king at all, and for aught we can tell the old woman may be rating her own son; the motive then becomes pitifully thin and poor. So far as painting goes the picture is quite on a level with other things produced at the same time. *The Card Players* is a little too like the *Village Politicians* in arrangement, while *The Rent Day* has the weakness

inseparable from a scene in two parts. From these defects, slight as they are, *The Blind Fiddler* is free, and in some ways it may be called Wilkie's masterpiece. But its colour is cold and slaty, a shortcoming which is now all the more conspicuous through the presence close by, in the National Gallery, of such a brilliant bit of tone as the study for *Blind Man's Buff*, which is here reproduced.

In the summer of 1809 Wilkie paid his first visit to Sir George Beaumont, at Coleorton. Haydon went with him, and what between host and fellow-guest, Wilkie must have had a lively time. Sir George deserves all the credit he has won for his benevolence, for his services to art, and especially for what he did towards getting a national collection begun in England. But he seems to have been a stupendous prig. He talked studio all day and read aloud half the night with that exasperating zeal which so often attends mediocrity. In all this he was aided and abetted by Haydon, the vainest, frankest, most jealous and tactless of men, and one of the worst artists that ever mistook his vocation. Whatever else he turned to, he did it better than he painted. He quarrelled, journalised, and talked politics with a genius of which his pictures give no hint. Such an ill-assorted pair as he and Wilkie surely never came together before. The one keenly observant, just to his neighbours, prudent for himself, free from illusions, warm-hearted, cold-mannered, and tolerant. The other self-conscious, impulsively affectionate, incapable of art or of seeing his own incapacity, indefatigably pugnacious, and torn with jealousy. That Haydon should understand Wilkie was impossible, and the worst of it is that his misapprehensions have been too often accepted by later writers. In 1809 *The Rent Day* and a smaller picture, *The Cut Finger*, were at the Academy, well hung and attracting crowds. Haydon's *Dentatus*, on the other hand, was neglected in the outer room. At this Haydon raised a tremendous dust, taking for granted that the ill-placing and not the poverty of his picture was to blame for its want of success. Wilkie refused to join in the outcry, for the sufficient reason, no doubt, that his friend's work had received its deserts. To suppose that the painter of *The Blind Fiddler* and *Village Politicians* could champion *Dentatus* on its merits was absurd. But what is Haydon's comment? 'Wilkie, Wilkie, whom I loved so dearly, the friend and companion of all my early days and thoughts, he shrank from my defence! How my heart ached at his coldness! But it was the timid man.' It was the fair man, who shrank from attacking the Academy for doing what he could not in his heart condemn.

All through Haydon's journal we find this blowing of hot and cold in alternate breaths on the character of his friend, and it may be accounted for without believing that Wilkie was either lukewarm in his affection or grasping in his dealings with money. Haydon was always in difficulties, and it is more than likely that on some of these occasions Wilkie may have withheld his purse. But that such a refusal, if it occurred, was not due to meanness is proved, in the first place, by Wilkie's conduct to those who had real claims upon him, and to whom assistance would be of real use; secondly, by the extreme moderation of his demands when he sold a picture; and, thirdly, by his persistent refusal, from first to last, of financial help from wealthy friends, even from the Regent himself.

In November, 1809, Wilkie was elected an Associate, and eighteen months later a full Member, of the Academy. Just before his promotion an incident occurred that, to one of his sensitive temperaments, must have been among the most painful of his life. He had finished for the Exhibition of 1810 a small picture which has been variously called *The Wardrobe Ransacked*, *No Fool like an Old Fool*, and *The Man with the Girl's Cap*. This was duly sent in, but afterwards withdrawn in deference to the suggestion of some Academicians, who either thought or pretended to think it would be killed by the work of Edward Bird, which was then beginning to attract attention. One of the actors in this cabal seems to have been an outsider, Robert Hartley Cromek, the engraver. 'Gad, sir!' said he to Cunningham, 'he [Bird] is predestined to humble your tall, thin countryman, who is as silent as the grave and as proud as Lucifer.' It was probably by this action of the Academy—which he must have



deeply resented when he saw his rival's production—that Wilkie was induced to have a separate exhibition of his own pictures. He took a room in Pall Mall, on the site now occupied by the Eagle Fire Office, and there he displayed eighteen finished pictures and eleven sketches. Financially, the venture is understood to have failed, but it brought him increased prestige. It gave him, too, a hint for one of his finest works, the *Distraint for Rent*. While the exhibition was open, a distress warrant was put in, not against Wilkie himself, but against the lessee from whom he had hired the room. The *Village Festival* was seized by the bailiff, and thirty-two of the painter's hardly-earned sovereigns had to go in its redemption.

In 1814, Wilkie and Haydon made a pilgrimage to France, then just thrown open by the first fall of Napoleon. They went by way of Dieppe and Rouen—where Wilkie was horrified to see the people playing games on Sunday!—to Paris. There they stayed for a month. Like most painters, Wilkie was a good critic of plays and players, and his journal deals much with their doings, but his heart, of course, was in the Louvre, then crowded with the treasures of the Continent. The French school had no charms for him; he found, too, that his beloved Teniers paled when seen beside the finer works of Ostade and Rembrandt. But 'Wilkie in Paris' has been drawn by Haydon, and I must reproduce his picture:—

'Notwithstanding Paris was filled with all the nations of the earth, the greatest oddity in it was unquestionably David Wilkie. His horrible French; his strange, tottering, feeble, pale look; his carrying about his prints to make bargains with print-sellers; his resolute determination never to leave the restaurants till he got his change right to a centime; his long disputes about *sous* and *demi-sous* with the *dame du comptoir*, whilst madame tried to cheat him, and as she pressed her pretty, ringed fingers on his arm without making the least impression, her "Mais, monsieur!" and his Scotch "Mais, madame!" were worthy of Molière.

'But there is a simplicity in his manners, a soundness and originality in his thinking, which make him an instructive companion. His remarks on the French School were capital. He said it was the consequence, and not the cause, of encouragement. There was hardly a day but we had a dispute, and yet we were always better pleased with each other's society than with the society of others. One great point of dispute was how much to give to the postillions. He said I always gave them more than they deserved, and I said he always gave them less.'

This journey was succeeded two years later by one in Holland, where Wilkie found the home of his beloved Dutch masters still answering with curious exactness to the pictures they had made of it. He says, in a letter to Sir George Beaumont:—

'On leaving Ostend, not only the people, the houses, and trees, but whole tracts of country, reminded one of the landscapes of Teniers; and on getting further into the country this was only relieved by the pictures of Rubens, Wouvermans, and some other masters, taking his place. I thought I could trace the particular districts in Holland where Ostade, Jan Steen, Cuyp, and Rembrandt had studied.'

In 1817 his holiday was taken in Scotland, where he enjoyed the hospitality of Sir Walter, then Mr., Scott, and paid that visit to the Ettrick Shepherd, of which we have a delightful account. At first Hogg, who was used to lion-hunting guests, did not realise who the Mr. Wilkie was his friend Laidlaw had brought him, but at last some word let in the light: 'Laidlaw,' he exclaimed, 'this is no' the *great* Mr. Wilkie?' 'It's just the great Mr. Wilkie,' replied the other. 'Mr. Wilkie,' cried the Shepherd, seizing his hand, 'I cannot tell how proud I am to see you in my house, nor how glad I am that you are so young a man!' 'The fellow!' said Scott, when he heard the story, 'it was the finest compliment ever paid to man.' It was during this visit that Wilkie painted his well-known picture of Scott and his family in the guise of peasants, and that he collected much of the material used in his *Penny Wedding*. On his return he painted the latter picture for the Regent, the *Reading of a Will* for the King of Bavaria, and the *Waterloo Gazette* for the Duke of Wellington. In August, 1822, he returned to Scotland, to be present at the famous visit of George IV.,

whose entry into Holyrood he afterwards painted. Two years later he was again in Edinburgh, making studies for his *John Knox Preaching*; and then, in the summer of 1825, came that breakdown in health which drove him abroad and led at last to a complete change in his art.

Wilkie's career down to the year 1825 was one of constant progress on the line struck out by his *Pitlessie Fair*. It is impossible now to discover what gave him that early bias, though the probability is that it came from some Dutch picture seen in Edinburgh while he was still at the Trustees' Academy. I have already compared *Pitlessie Fair* to the work of Jan Molenaer, and indeed there is nothing improbable in the notion that some picture of that second-rate but strongly individual master may have met the young painter's eyes. But of course this is mere conjecture, and it must not be forgotten that both David Allan and



THE HUSTINGS : SKETCH FOR A PICTURE. BY SIR DAVID WILKIE.

'Old Carse' had already painted the same class of subjects. Wilkie was, throughout his life, so surely affected by any kindred spirit that came in his way, that the peculiarities of his first picture are pretty certain to have had their origin outside himself. In *Village Politicians* the influence of Teniers is in full swing. The composition, though richer than any Teniers, is entirely based upon that master's practice. So, too, are the technical methods and the choice of tints. But it is not only in composition that Wilkie here beats his teacher. His linear arabesque is more completely rhythmical, his heads more studied and with stronger individuality. On the other hand, his handling is far less crisp and assured, his colour less pure, and his shadows less clear and transparent. In these latter respects Wilkie improved as he went on, but, as a creation, he never surpassed the *Village Politicians*. His Teniers period lasted down to 1811, when he painted that sketch for *Blind Man's Buff* which betrays the growing influence of another master. Up till now a cool silveriness had been the quality he aimed at, but about this time a fine Ostade* was shown to him, when he immediately went home, and, rubbing a coat of asphaltum over his *Duncan Gray*,† turned that from a silver picture

* Said to have been *The Alchemist*, afterwards in the Peel Collection, and now in the National Gallery.

† Now at South Kensington.

into a gold one. The operation was disastrous to the picture, which was a network of white cracks a few years ago. It has now been carefully repaired, and the same treatment, in a slighter degree, has been applied to the *Blind Fiddler*. In his 'Ostade' manner Wilkie never did anything finer than the sketch for *Blind Man's Buff*. A little brown, and even a little mannered, it is finely composed, abounding in humour, rich in tone, deep and clear in atmosphere, brimming over with movement and vitality. It is, in a word, *bien dit*. There is not a superfluous syllable, but all is told. This sketch was purchased from Wilkie by Lord Mulgrave. At his sale, in 1832, it was bought by Mr. C. L. Bredel, whose sister bequeathed it to the nation twelve years ago.

After Ostade came Rembrandt to affect Wilkie's practice. The first picture in which he adopted a looser handling and a more forcible chiaroscuro, was *The Parish Beadle*, now in the National Gallery. Here the influence of the great Leydener is manifest. Colour is almost entirely banished from the shadows, which are deep, brown, and transparent, but is



SKETCH FOR THE 'WATERLOO GAZETTE.' BY SIR DAVID WILKIE.

used with a bolder purity in the high lights than Wilkie had ever shown before. At present the shadows are undeniably too obscure, but this may be partly the result of time. The picture was painted in 1822, and exhibited the following year. According to the Academy Catalogue, it was painted in illustration of the following words from Burns' 'Justice of the Peace:—'And an officer giveth sufficient notice who he is, when he saith to the party, "I arrest you in the King's name;" and in such case the party, at their peril, ought to obey him.' It was not often that Wilkie failed dramatically, and he certainly succeeded here. If all record of our social system were lost but this picture, it would still tell its story. So much could scarcely be said of what must, I suppose, be called the chief work of this phase in his art, *The Preaching of Knox before the Lords of the Congregation on June 10, 1559*. This was begun before his visit to Italy, but not finished until 1832. Wilkie worked upon it at the same time as upon *The Entry of George IV. into Holyrood*, and in each both his early and his later styles are to be traced. 'The mixture,' said Haydon, 'is like oil and water.' *Knox Preaching* is full of portraits, and even the furniture, such as the pulpit out of which the reformer threatens to plunge headforemost, gave the painter an infinity of pains, for he went to Scotland to study it from the actual relic. The picture fails, not as a conception, but from technical defects. In colour it is hot and cold, in chiaroscuro restless and incoherent, in impasto painty and capricious.

Over Wilkie's Spanish period better haste must be made. It was in 1825, as I have said, that he began the prolonged sojourn abroad that was to have such an effect upon his work and his rank as an artist. During the first years of his absence he spent most of his time in Italy and Southern Germany, but towards the end of 1827 he made his way to Spain, where he stayed for rather more than seven months—'the best employed time of his professional life,' in his own opinion. Here posterity, from whose judgment there is no appeal, has failed to agree with him. During his stay he painted four pictures, the two best the *Maid of Saragossa*, and the *Guerilla Council of War*. Among Wilkie's own pathetic comments upon what he had seen and done in the Peninsula were these: 'Spain is the unpoached game-preserve of Europe, in which I have had six months' freedom to myself alone.' And again, 'For what I have seen, I may almost be the envy of every British artist; and from what I have been doing, weak as I am, I have again the happiness to say, with the great Correggio, though on a far humbler occasion, "Anch' io sono pittore."' What would have been his feelings could he have foreseen that, before half a century had passed, the pictures on which he based his right to be named with the great Spaniards and Italians, would only be looked at twice because they were painted by the same man as *Village Politicians*, *Distraining for Rent*, and *Pitlessie Fair!*

Wilkie is an almost unique example of a great artist without a great individuality. Mr. Ruskin somewhere laments Constable's unteachableness; I wonder whether he has ever cared to realise what the opposite quality did for Wilkie? It is safe to say that if Wilkie had never travelled, if he had seen nothing more in the way of pictures than a dozen good examples of Teniers, Adrian Ostade, Metsu, Jan Steen, and Brouwer, he would have stood on a far higher pedestal than he does now. With works, so sympathetic to himself as nature made him, to hold up a standard, and with the peasantry of his own country to provide subjects, he would have been a pictorial Burns. As it is, his career is a beacon to warn us of the danger we run in our modern craze for cosmopolitanism in art. His delight in the South was of course genuine, and his admiration for its art was, no doubt, as real as he believed it. But it was founded neither on sufficient knowledge, nor on sufficient community between his own inner self and the life he found there. To us, with the critical eyes of to-day, it is easy to see that his *Maid of Saragossa*, his *Columbus*, his *Spanish Guerillas*, are Scots in disguise, and that in the way they are set on canvas the handling of a painter in small has simply been expanded, as by a magnifying glass, to cover the wider surface. There is none of the broad brushing, of the skill in carrying colour without loss of quality over considerable spaces, of the faculty for contriving schemes of light and shade that shall be at once simple, rightly graduated and well centred, in which lay the mastery of such men as Titian and Velasquez.

Wilkie left Madrid in May, 1828, and next month was back in London. There he met Haydon, who found him 'thinner, and more nervous than ever: his keen and bushy brow looked irritable, eager, nervous, and full of genius.' A few days later the old friends had a great discussion about painting. 'Now,' says Haydon (!) 'it is all Spanish and Italian art. He thinks nothing of his early and beautiful efforts—his *Rent Day*, his *Fiddler*, his *Politicians*. They are not carried far enough! as if anything on earth in point of expression and story was ever carried farther.' The fame Wilkie had gathered in Spain had found an echo in England, and people were eager to see the eight pictures he sent to the Exhibition of 1829. Two of these were Italian subjects, three Spanish, and one the full-length portrait of Lord Kellie, which was at the 'Old Masters' in 1881. On the whole his new departure seems to have been even then deplored. From the critics it provoked an onslaught which, as Cunningham tells us, 'Wilkie endured . . . with astonishing composure; he had made up his mind in the matter, for he felt that if he continued to work in his usual laborious style of detail and finish, he would never achieve independence nor add another sprig of laurel to his wreath.'



On the death of Sir Thomas Lawrence, in 1830, Wilkie was appointed to the office of Painter in Ordinary to the King, and his name was brought forward for the P.R.A.-ship. For this, however, he only received two votes, those of Collins and Leslie; and it is pretty certain that for the peculiar duties of their President the Academicians did well to prefer Mr. Martin Archer Shee. But the public feeling at his elevation was fairly expressed in an epigram which has been often quoted, for the successful candidate had perpetrated poetry in his time:—

‘ See Painting crowns her sister Poesy!
The world is all astonished—so is *Shee*.’

Between 1830 and 1840 Wilkie painted a great number of pictures, but not many upon which a critic cares to dwell. Among the best are *The First Earring*, in the National Gallery, and *Napoleon and Pius VII.*, which changed hands a few years ago at Christie's. In 1840 began that pilgrimage through Europe to the East from which he was never to return. Leaving London on August the 15th with his friend, Mr. W. Woodburn, he made his way by the Rhine and the Danube to Constantinople, where nothing excited his wonder so much as the contrast between the splendid dress of the Turks and the wretched hovels in which they lived. At Stamboul Wilkie painted the Sultan's portrait. There, too, he was entertained by Sir Moses Montefiore, who, though he died but the other day, was the same age as his guest. He then made his way by Smyrna, Rhodes, and Beyrout, to Jerusalem. From the Holy City he sent that letter to Sir Robert Peel which contains the first expression of our modern ideas as to how Scripture scenes should be painted:—

‘ It is a fancy or belief that the art of our time and of our British people may reap some benefit that has induced me to undertake this journey. It is to see, to inquire, and to judge, not whether I can, but whether those who are younger, or with far higher attainments and powers, may not in future be required, in the advance and spread of our knowledge, to refer at once to the localities of Scripture events, when the great work is to be essayed of representing Scripture history. Great as the assistance, I might say the inspiration, which the art of painting has derived from the illustration of Christianity, and great as the talent and genius have been which this high walk of art has called into being, yet it is remarkable that none of the great painters to whom the world has hitherto looked for the visible appearance of Scripture scenes and feelings have ever visited the Holy Land.’

It is a touching aspiration, and since Wilkie's time it has been realised. But how much the richer does it make us? Is our religious art greater than that of Angelico, of Raphael, or even of Rembrandt, because the real East has been brought on to the canvas?

There is something in Wilkie's disappearance from the world that has a great effect upon the imagination. It was in June, 1841, that he left Alexandria, a passenger in the steamship *Oriental* bound for Malta, Gibraltar, and England. A few days later he went ashore at Valetta, where he was attacked by some slight disorder, and returned to the ship. But on the morning of June the first, he was found to be sinking, and before noon he died. Gibraltar was in sight and the captain endeavoured to land the body. This, however, quarantine rules prevented. So the ship's carpenter made a rough coffin, and at half-past eight in the evening the engines were stopped, and as the red gleam of lanterns struggled with the last rays of day, the sea closed over all that was left of David Wilkie.

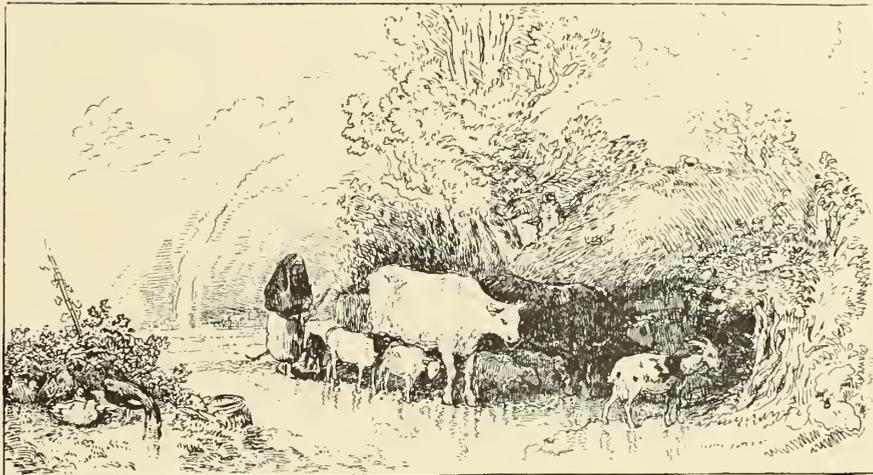
IV.

John Burnet, James Burnet, Alexander Fraser (senior), William Nicholson, Andrew Geddes.

AT the end of the last century the first engraver in Scotland was one Robert Scott. Born at Lanark in 1771, he had been apprenticed to his trade sixteen years later, and at the age of thirty, or little more, was at the head of the best *atelier* in the capital. Beside his engraving, he had a title to fame in that he was the father of David Scott the painter, and of William Bell Scott the poet and artist, who is still alive. About 1800 he received as a pupil a boy who was afterwards to become famous as 'Wilkie's engraver,' John Burnet. Burnet had been born in 1784, and, therefore, began the serious business of life at the same age as his master. Scott's studio was a busy one. Plates for books, and transcripts of Scottish scenery, were turned out in great numbers, and on these the 'prentice hand of young Burnet would be exercised. But work was light enough to allow him to combine the education of a painter with the mechanical training of a reproducer. He became a student at the Trustees' Academy, where Wilkie and Allan were his fellow-pupils, and in after-life he used to think that this over-sanguine attempt to follow two professions at once had cramped his development in both; on the other hand, his enrolment in John Graham's battalion was the origin of that friendship with Wilkie which was the root of his after success.

In 1806 Burnet paid his first visit to London. 'Wilkie preceded me,' he tells us, 'by twelve months, and the fame created by his picture of the *Village Politicians* produced such a sensation in Scotland that I hastily finished the work I had in hand, and set sail for London in a Leith smack. On my arrival at Miller's Wharf, I seemed to feel what most Scotchmen feel, "ample room and verge enough," and though with only a few shillings in my pocket, and a single impression from one of my plates for Cooke's "Novelists," I felt myself in the proper element, having all that confidence peculiar, I believe, to my countrymen. I went instinctively towards Somers Town, where many of my brother artists resided, and next morning to No. 10 Sol's Row, Hampstead Road, to call on Wilkie. He was delighted to see me, and exclaimed, "I am glad you are come, for London is the proper place for artists." *The Blind Fiddler* was on Wilkie's easel, and struck the man who was afterwards to make so fine a plate of it, as a wonderful work for one who had seen so few pictures in his youth. After settling in London, Burnet worked for a time on plates for Cooke's 'Novelists,' Britton and Brayley's 'England and Wales,' and Mrs. Inchbald's 'British Theatre.' But things like these did not fill his mind, and he cast about for some important picture on which to employ his burin. Wilkie had just finished *The Jew's Harp*, and an arrangement was made to engrave it the same size as the original. Burnet says the plate was carried out in the style of Le Bas. Philippe Le Bas was the first to use dry point in rendering the mystery of distance and the depth of sky. In this he was followed and improved upon by Woollett, whose traditions descended to William Sharp. While Burnet's plate was in progress, he made Sharp's acquaintance, and the peculiar methods he used may very likely have been due to the latter's advice. Sharp he calls 'the great founder of the English school in this department'—historical engraving—which proves that, like many others, he was more or less blind to the surpassing merit of Woollett.

The Jew's Harp was a great success, and a plate after *The Blind Fiddler* was fixed upon to follow it. This, Burnet tells us, was executed in the manner of Cornelis Vischer. There is more graving in it than etching, and though wanting a little both in depth and finesse, it at once gained a very wide popularity. As it left Burnet's hand it won the applause of his brother engravers, but Wilkie was more fastidious, and Burnet had to retouch the plate. The original proofs were, so far as possible, destroyed. In those still extant the hat of the boy with the bellows is rendered in single line, and there are other peculiarities. The success of this plate led to the proposal of a companion in *The Village Politicians*. Over this, however, a dispute arose, and in the end Burnet threw up the work in dissatisfaction with the terms proposed, which were that the engraving was to be executed entirely at his own expense, and half the proceeds paid over to Wilkie.* But in spite of this squabble the two men were soon again in cordial collaboration, and Burnet engraved *The Reading of the Will*, *The Waterloo Gazette*, *The Rabbit on the Wall*, *The Letter of Introduction*, *The Death of Tippoo Sahib*, and *The Village School*. He took advantage of the peace of 1814 to visit Paris, and for five months worked constantly in the Louvre, which was still over-



THE DRINKING PLACE. AFTER THE ETCHING BY JOHN BURNET.

flowing with the treasures of Europe. On his return he again took up the burin, and produced his well-known plates after Metz and Rembrandt.

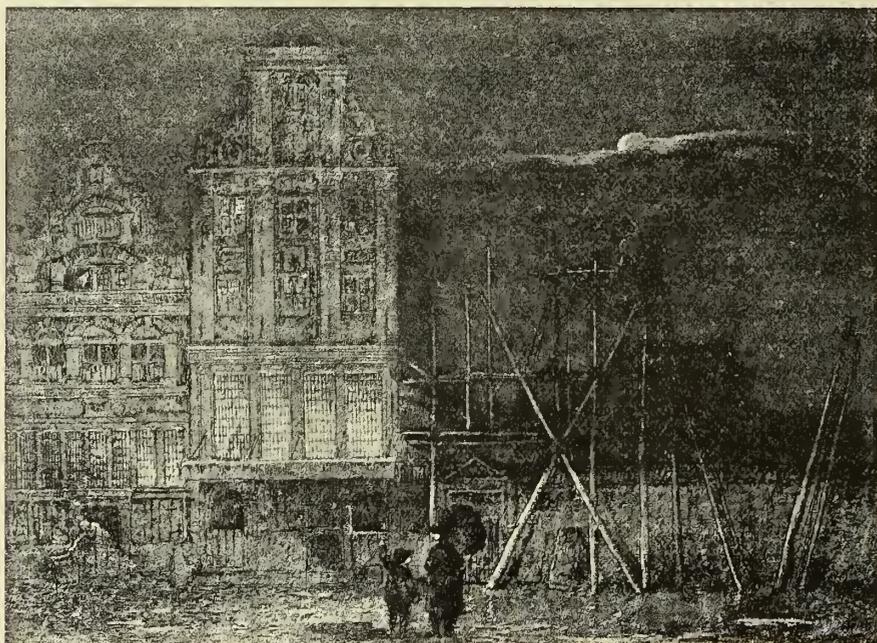
Burnet's paintings are not very numerous. The best known of them all is the *Greenwich Pensioners*, painted for the Duke of Wellington as a companion to Wilkie's *Waterloo Gazette*. In the Sheepshanks Collection, *Cows Drinking*, a panel painted in 1817, and *The Fish Market at Hastings*, do him fair justice. The *Draught Players* (1808), the *Humorous Ballad* (1818), and *The Valentine*, are also among his better works. Burnet etched a few original plates, of which the one we reproduce is an average example, and a great number of illustrations to books published by himself. Of the latter the most important are, 'A Practical Treatise on Painting,' published in 1827; 'An Essay on the Education of the Eye' (1837); 'Practical Hints on Light and Shade' (1838); 'On Colour in Painting' (1843); 'Rembrandt and his Works' (1849); 'Turner and his Works' (1852); and 'The Progress of a Painter in the Nineteenth Century.' The reproduction here given of *Rembrandt's House at Amsterdam*, is from one of the plates to the 'Hints on Light and Shade.' In 1860 he received a pension on the Civil List, and retired to Stoke Newington, where he passed the last few years of his life. He died in April, 1868, at the age of eighty-four. As a painter, John Burnet had some natural gifts. He had a faculty for picking up this beauty from one man

* The plate was engraved by Raimbach.

and that from another, added to which his eye for colour was at least respectable. He was thus enabled in his less ambitious works to deceive the critic into believing his powers greater than they were.

Four years later than John, James Burnet was born at Musselburgh, of the same father and mother. He was a weakly child from his birth, and he died of consumption before he was twenty-eight. But as an artist he showed a finer genius than his brother, and, had he lived, would have taken a higher place. Cunningham compares him to Bonington, and in some of his pictures signs of a gift that might have led to fame may be traced. In early youth James Burnet was apprenticed to one Liddel, a wood-carver; and, like his brother John, he combined his legitimate *métier* with the study of painting under John Graham. It was not long before brush and palette conquered knife and chisel, and the young craftsman set out to join his brother in London.

This was in 1810, when only six years of life were left to him. He found John busy



REMBRANDT'S HOUSE. AFTER A PLATE BY JOHN BURNET.

on his plate after *The Blind Fiddler*. The picture stood beside the engraver as he worked, and James looked earnestly and long upon it. He had seen nothing like it in the north. It touched a chord in him that had hitherto been mute, and he determined to devote his powers to what he called 'the style of nature.' The study of such examples of Dutch art as were to be seen at the British Institution confirmed him in this; and for months he wandered about the fields round London, sketching every scene that took his fancy, and 'stuffing it' with appropriate figures.

The fruit of his study in the fields is to be found not only in the pictures he has left behind him, but also in the series of notes scribbled on his sketching-boards and sheets, and quoted by Allan Cunningham. Some of these show a closer and more precise observation than was usual in the early years of the century. I may quote a specimen:—

'The sky being of a receding character, all those points which contribute to give it such character should be the study of the painter. Mere white, for example, will seldom keep its place in a sky, but ought to be used in foreground objects for the purpose of giving a retiring quality to the whites in the sky and distance. Softness of form also aids in giving the sky a retiring character, although it is necessary to give a little sharpness to prevent the sky appearing what is termed woolly; yet very little is sufficient to give firmness to the whole. Clouds are much more opaque in the north than in the south, as the

light shines upon them in the one situation and through them in the other. Their form alters much, too, in accordance to the time of day: at noon they are round, and more like those of Wouvermans; in the evening they are more like those of Cuyp or Both, especially about an hour before the sun goes down.'

The best of James Burnet's pictures are *Taking Cattle to Shelter during a Storm*, in the Scottish National Gallery, *Crossing the Brook*, *Cattle by a Pool in Summer*, and *The Boy with the Cores*. Their author died at Lee, in Kent, on the 27th of July, 1816. For more intimate details of his life I may refer the reader to his brother John's 'Progress of a Painter,' into which James is introduced as the young Scottish artist, Knox. Allan Cunningham speaks, in his short biography, of the large number of drawings and studies he had seen by James Burnet. Unfortunately none of these appear to have found their way into any known collection, and I have failed to discover a single one that could be reproduced in these pages.



MURDER OF THE REGENT MURRAY. BY SIR W. ALLAN.

One of the most widely known, in his time, of Scottish painters was Sir William Allan, who succeeded to the Presidency of the Scottish Academy in 1838. Born in 1782, he had been educated partly at the Trustees' Academy under Graham, partly at the Royal Academy in London. While still very young he had spent some years in Russia and in Western Asia, and had painted several pictures, which were bought by the Czar, and now hang in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. In 1814 he had returned to Scotland, and had settled in Edinburgh, and sixteen years later had been elected a member of the English Academy. After Wilkie's death Allan was made limner for Scotland and knighted. From 1826 to within a few years of his death he was Master of the Trustees' Academy. He died in 1850. The Edinburgh Gallery possesses several examples of his work, including his own portrait and a *Battle of Fannockburn*, which, at his death, was left unfinished on his easel. His best-known work is the *Battle of Waterloo*, which now hangs on the staircase of the Junior United Service Club. It is the counterpart of the *Waterloo from the French Side*, which was bought by the Duke of Wellington. But the best picture by Allan that I know of is his portrait of Sir Walter Scott, in the National Portrait Gallery, in which there is more harmony and a fuller sense of light than most of his works can show. The *Murder of the Regent Murray* (see above) won Allan his election to the Royal Academy. It is in the collection of the Duke of Bedford.

Alexander Fraser was another pupil of John Graham's. Born at Edinburgh in 1786, he entered the Trustees' Academy about 1804. In 1810 he sent a picture of still life to the Royal Academy. This was followed two years later by two scenes of domestic *genre*, and in 1813 he came to settle in London. For a long time his patronage came almost exclusively from members of his own profession. He was engaged by Wilkie as a sort of journeyman, and for some twenty years painted the still life and other minor details in Sir David's pictures. Although Fraser worked as a rule in Wilkie's studio, he still contrived to paint pictures of his own and to exhibit at the Academy and the British Institution. From the Directors of the latter he received, in 1842, a *bonus* of fifty guineas for the general merit of his work, a benefaction which is pretty conclusive as to his want of commercial success. In 1840 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy, and about ten years later was compelled by failing health to give up the practice of his art. He died at Wood Green in February, 1865. Fraser's pictures are mostly founded on Scottish life, and, of course display a pretty close imitation of Wilkie. But they are by no means without merit of their own. Like most of his Scottish contemporaries, Fraser helped to illustrate the Waverley Novels.

If 'Waverley' had many illustrators, so had its author's features. To paint him was a sort of test for young Scottish artists. 'Sir Walter's' visage was familiar to every man, woman, and child in the North, and no surer path to fame existed than to reproduce it with success. Among the painters who did so was William Nicholson, R.S.A. Born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, of Scottish parents, in 1784, he exhibited a portrait of William Bewick at the Academy in 1810, and in 1820 migrated to Edinburgh, where he settled. His best works were his water-colour portraits. These had the reputation of being excellent likenesses, while, as art, their merit was very considerable. One of the best was the portrait of Sir Walter Scott, already alluded to. This he etched and published in a series with many others, each plate being accompanied by a short biographical notice. Nicholson was one of the founders and most active promoters of the Royal Scottish Academy. He was the first secretary, and distinguished himself generally by his successful opposition to the lay directors of the Royal Institution, wherein, previous to 1829, Scottish painters had practically been compelled to exhibit their works. Nicholson died in Edinburgh in 1844.

Two years later than Nicholson, William Craig Sheriff was born near Haddington. He, again, was a pupil of John Graham, and though he died in 1805, six months short of his nineteenth birthday, he contrived to give evidence of great natural powers, and to carry well on towards completion a very clever *Escape of Queen Mary from Loch Leven*. This picture, unfinished as he left it, was engraved by William Home Lizars.

And now I must turn back a few years to the birthday of a more richly gifted artist than any of those I have just been naming. Andrew Geddes, A.R.A., was born in Edinburgh in 1783. His father, David Geddes, was a Civil Servant, an Auditor of Excise. It is said, too, that he was a man of taste, a collector of old prints and *bric-à-brac*, and a genial companion. During his father's life Andrew was constant to the high stool in the Excise which had been provided for him by his parent's influence. But when Geddes senior departed this life in 1807, the son quitted the office for the schools of the Royal Academy, and became one of the famous set which comprised Wilkie, Jackson, and Haydon. After a few years' study in London, he returned to Edinburgh, and commenced practice as a portrait-painter. Between 1810 and 1813 he sent several portraits to the Academy, and then, in 1814, he returned to London, which remained his head-quarters for the rest of his life. Geddes, however, was always a bit of a wanderer, oscillating with some pertinacity between Edinburgh, London, Paris, and Rome; now putting down his name for the Associateship of the Academy, and anon removing it in pique or disappointment. In 1831 he put it down for the last time, and was elected in the following year. During 1839 he visited Holland, and soon after his return signs of failing health appeared. These developed



into consumption, and of that disease he died on the 5th of May, 1844. There has been a good deal of confusion over the dates of Geddes's life. Redgrave says he was born about 1789; the catalogue of the Scottish National Gallery says 1783, which is confirmed by Mrs. Geddes in her short memoir of her husband. Redgrave gets into confusion, too, over later dates, for he says that in 1807 Geddes was at work at the Royal Academy; that in 1808, while resident in Edinburgh, he exhibited at the Academy; that in 1810, 'when pursuing his studies in London,' he sent *Draught Players* to the Exhibition; that in 1813, 'having commenced practice,' he sent four portraits from Edinburgh; and that in 1814 he returned to London, and thenceforward annually spent several months there. The truth of the matter seems to be what I have stated above.



OLD WOMAN EXAMINING A RING. FROM THE ETCHING
BY ANDREW GEDDES.

As a painter, Geddes was one of the most unequal of men. A few of his works reach a very high level indeed, while others fall below that of the second-rate amateur. In the National Gallery at Edinburgh a portrait of himself shows an extreme cleverness in the management of rather *criant* tones. The costume is scarlet, and the whole picture is painted in a bright diffused light, suggesting that its author had lately been making a study of the *Chapeau de Poil*. A fancy head in the same collection suggests the same idea. A portrait of Mrs. Geddes, senior, the painter's mother, on the other hand, is very low in tone and almost monochromatic in colour. As a conception it is probably the masterpiece of Geddes. The old lady—not that she is so *very* old—is represented in a coal-scuttle bonnet, with a black gauze veil hanging about her cheeks, and one of those heavy, tipped cloaks which are now only to be seen on the women of Belgium. To this portrait we shall have to return when we come to speak of its author's work with the point. Until a few years ago a small Geddes used to hang in the National Gallery, which may once have been a fine though 'unimportant' example of his powers. Unfortunately it had been much glazed with asphalte, and had nearly vanished from the canvas before it was taken down from

the walls. It is said to have been the very picture to which hangs a funny tale told of Wilkie. On one occasion, when the latter was on the Hanging Committee, at Somerset House, he carried about a little picture all the morning, trying it in this place and that. 'What on earth are you doing with that picture, Wilkie?' at last cried one of his colleagues. 'Man!' said Wilkie, 'it's a Geddes!' One variant of the story goes on to say that, after all, the picture was by an Englishman! and that Wilkie threw it aside as soon as he found out his mistake. But this version is an afterthought.

The most important of those works by Geddes which still survive is the altar-piece in



PORTRAIT OF ARCHIBALD SKIRVING. FROM THE ETCHING BY ANDREW GEDDES.

the church of St. James, Garlick Hill, the commission for which he is said to have obtained through the influence of some relative of the Burnets, who was curate of the parish. It is an *Ascension*. The idea seems to be taken from Titian's *Assumption*. The figure of Christ floats upwards in much the same attitude as Mary's in the Venetian picture, and the group of apostles, evangelists, and holy women below recalls that of Vecellio. In colour, tone, and *facture*, the work is excellent—so excellent, indeed, that one cannot but wish that some safer depository than this forgotten church should be found for it. I said above that the *Ascension* was the most important picture by Geddes that survived, because one on which he expended still more labour was destroyed by his own hands. This was the *Finding of the Scottish Regalia in Edinburgh Castle*, with portraits of the Commissioners. With these portraits the painter had infinite trouble; and although his work made a sensation when seen at the Academy of 1821, and was successful as an engraving, it found no purchaser. In the end Geddes cut it up, and sold the heads separately as portrait studies. During his

stay in Rome he painted Gibson, the sculptor, Cardinal Weld, and a few more portraits. Towards the end of his life he showed a predilection for religious subjects, several of which he treated, besides the *Ascension* for the church of St. James.

But his chief claim to remembrance lies, after all, in his etchings—of these he produced, so far as can be discovered, just forty. Some are etchings proper, some are dry-points, and in some, again, both methods are skilfully combined. Just as another is a born painter, so was Geddes a born etcher. Even when his subject is ill-advised and his interest but half excited, we find enough to delight us in the mere freedom of his line, in the instinct with which he seizes upon right ideas for translation with the point, and the right way to set about the work. Many of his plates are portraits. For these he has evidently taken the famous *icones* of Van Dyck as his model, although in his copies and experimental plates generally he betrays the study of Rembrandt, and of Rembrandt alone. Of the latter we give an example in a reproduction of *An Old Woman Examining a Ring*, from a good impression in the British Museum. The drawing, especially of the left hand, is far from



READING A WILL. AFTER THE ETCHING BY WILKIE.

perfect, but the organization of line is very good, particularly in the old woman's cap. The second illustration is from an unfinished portrait of that Archibald Skirving of whom I spoke in my second chapter. The impression here reproduced shows the state in which Geddes left the plate. It will be seen how boldly the features are modelled, and with how little of that timid turning into corners with which so many English etchers have spoilt their work. Mr. Hamerton, in speaking of the etched work of Geddes, singles out the *Child with a Pear* for special praise; and, as a dry-point, nothing could be freer or more spontaneous. But it seems to me that, as an artist on copper, Geddes is at his best in the plate after his mother's portrait. In its finished state—and with Geddes the finished is always the best state—this is one of the finest etchings since Rembrandt. Etching proper, dry-point and bur, and even the mezzotinter's 'rocker,' are used to elaborate the effect. The impression here reproduced was formerly in the collection of the late Mr. Gibson-Craig. Our facsimile was made by the kind permission of Mr. J. M. Gray, to whom the print now belongs. The best example of the powers of Geddes as a landscape etcher is a small Rembrandtesque landscape with farm-buildings under the shadow of some trees. Unfortunately this is very much spoiled by the sky. This, apparently, is an experiment in aquatint. The finest impression I have seen of this also belongs to Mr. Gray. The best of the impressions in the British Museum is much less brilliant.

In my chapter on Wilkie, I said nothing of his etchings, because it seemed well to speak of them together with those of Geddes, by which, perhaps, they were suggested. Wilkie's etchings are fourteen in number. Several, not to say most, are in the false style for which the English Etching Club was afterwards to be so largely responsible. Of these the best, perhaps, is the one here reproduced (page 37). The subject is a variation upon one of the groups in the picture at Munich—*The Reading of a Will*. A much finer plate is the dry-point known as the *Lost Receipt*. In this Wilkie achieves a richness almost worthy of Rembrandt. In spite, however, of one or two fine passages, such as the dog scratching



THE POPE AND THE GOLDSMITH. AFTER THE ETCHING BY WILKIE.

himself in the foreground, the plate lacks variety and delicacy. The etching sometimes known as *Benvenuto Cellini Exhibiting a Censer to a Pope*, but which I prefer to call merely 'The Pope and the Goldsmith,' is better in nearly every way. Mr. Hamerton does not hesitate to call it 'one of the most masterly plates in existence.' Masterly, perhaps, is rather too strong a word, for in parts such as the shading on the body of the kneeling goldsmith, there is too much of what looks like bad engraving, while here and there, on the face of the attendant in the back-ground, for instance, and on the left wrist of the goldsmith, the burin has been used with some lack of discretion.

I have dwelt at this length on the etchings of Geddes and Wilkie because, at the time they were done, they seem to have been the only attempts to follow in the footsteps of Rembrandt. Etching, in a sense, has never been a lost art. For nearly three centuries there have always been men in sufficient numbers who worked on metal with point and

acid. But for long years at a time the peculiarity of the art has been obscured, and its unequalled power to express the passing thoughts of any man who can draw neglected. That either Wilkie or Geddes had much to do with raising the art out of this condition, it would not be fair to say. Such honour as that confers must be given elsewhere. But, at least, they deserve the credit which belongs to priority in the perception of its true capacities, and of that credit the larger share must be put down to Andrew Geddes.

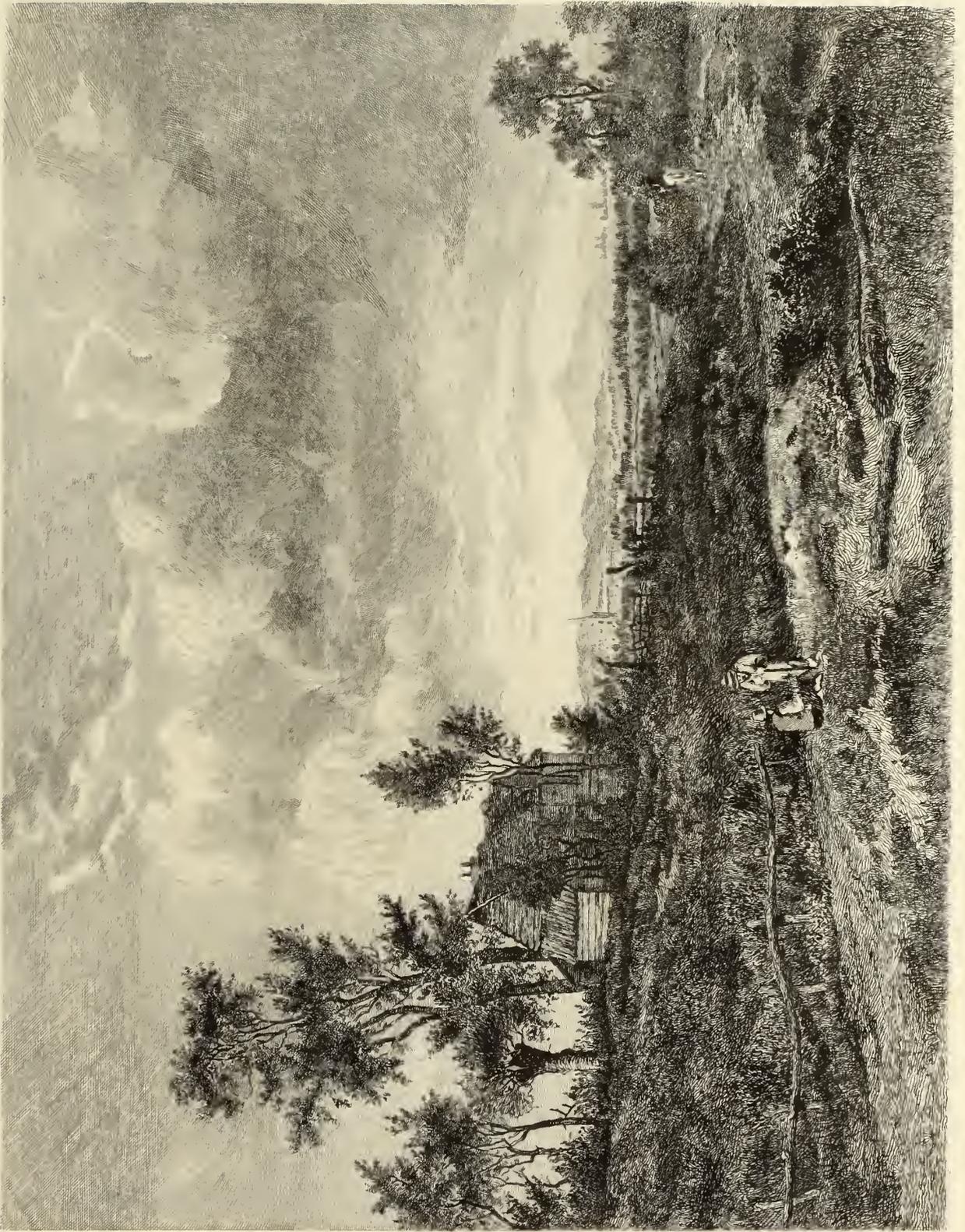
V.

The Schetkys; Patrick Nasmyth; D. O. Hill; Horatio Macculloch; J. A. Houston; David Roberts; Sir John Watson Gordon; John Graham Gilbert; Colvin Smith; William Bonnar; Sir Daniel Macnee; Sir Francis Grant.

THIS fifth chapter has to be devoted mainly to a period of recoil. Between the earlier years of the century—when Raeburn, Wilkie, and Geddes, were each doing work that had true vitality—and the great development of our own time, there was an interregnum; a period of comparative infertility, corresponding to that which was at its height in England between 1840 and 1850. The best portrait-painters in Scotland were straightforward makers of likenesses; the best landscapists were hide-bound, as it were, by slavery to Claude and the second flight of the Dutchmen; the best figure-painters were, for the most part, men who lived on the tradition of Wilkie. Good pictures were still painted now and then; but originality had died out, and all that was left to admire was the skill with which the old formulæ were sometimes used.

Of the two first names at the head of this page, one, that of John Alexander Schetky, belongs rather to the old school, for he died in 1824. He practised art, too, more as an amateur than as a professional painter. From early youth he had carried on two studies together—that of medicine at Edinburgh University, and that of drawing in the Trustees' Academy. Schetky, who was descended from an old Transylvanian family, was born in Edinburgh in 1785. After completing his course at the University, he joined the Army in the Peninsula as surgeon, and served with some distinction under Beresford. In 1814 he returned to Edinburgh and resumed his pencil. In 1819, however, he was recalled to active service, and sent to Ceylon; whence, by exchange with another officer, he moved to Sierra Leone, his object being to illustrate the ground made famous by the explorations of Mungo Park. But for Schetky Africa proved a grave. He died at Cape Coast Castle on September 5, 1824. Some of the illustrations to Scott's 'Provincial Antiquities' are by him.

Alexander Schetky's brother, Christian, was older than he by some seven years. I have spoken of the younger first, because Christian Schetky only died a few years ago; and most of his art is in the spirit of the time at which we have now arrived. John Christian Schetky was born in Edinburgh on August 11, 1778, and was educated at the High School. His ambition was to become a sailor and to join the Navy; but that idea being vetoed, he devoted himself to art, and entered the studio of Alexander Nasmyth. When he was only seventeen, he was already making enough for his own support by teaching, scene-painting, and other *parerga*. In 1801 he set out for Rome with two companions, and on foot. The three travelled by way of Paris and Switzerland, and stayed for a time in most of the important cities they passed. In 1802 Schetky was back in England, and went to Oxford; where he lived and taught art for about six years. In 1808 he was appointed to a junior professorship of civil drawing at the Royal Military College, Great Marlow, the precursor of Sandhurst. At the time of his appointment the Commandant was Colonel Le Marchant, who was afterwards killed at Salamanca; and so one is led to guess that Christian Schetky may have had something to do with his brother's employment as *medico* in the armies of Wellington and



Beresford. In 1810 Christian Schetky visited the seat of war in Portugal, where he met his brother; in 1811 he was back in England, and teaching at the Royal Naval College, Portsmouth; in 1815 he was appointed Painter in Water Colours to the Duke of Clarence; in 1819 Marine Painter to the Prince Regent, whom he accompanied to Ireland in 1821; and in 1836 Professor at Addiscombe. Between 1840 and 1845 he painted the pictures by which he is likely to be remembered, not perhaps for their excellence, but because one is in the National Gallery, and the other two at Windsor Castle. The subject of the first is the *Sinking of the Royal George*; that curious catastrophe which proves that, even in the great days of the navy, disgraceful accidents used to occur. Schetky's art can be very fairly judged from this example. Its merits are simplicity in conception, good drawing, and colour which, without being in any sense good, is at least clear and fresh and not inharmonious. In 1861 Schetky made a voyage to Lisbon for his health; but it was not until thirteen years later that his long career came to an end. He died on the 29th of January, 1874, at the goodly age of ninety-six.

Besides Schetky it is difficult to find a Scottish artist of his day who won any repute for painting the sea. This is all the more remarkable that in later times so large a proportion of Scottish pictures have been seascapes. Patrick Nasmyth, no doubt, painted the sea now and then. An excellent example of his work in that *genre* appeared at Christie's during the present season, but it is by no means of the sea that his name reminds us. Peter Nasmyth, commonly called Patrick by himself and every one else, was born in Edinburgh on January 7, 1787. The date commonly given is 1786, but that seems to be a mistake. He was the son and pupil of Alexander Nasmyth, and showed such an early devotion to art that he gave himself little time for any other education. Early in life his right hand was accidentally injured, so he learned to paint with his left. To add to his troubles, an illness left him deaf, but in spite of all this he stuck to his painting, and in 1807 came to London, where his work soon became popular and earned for him the name of 'the English Hobbema.' He improved on the style of his father; his conceptions were at once more varied and more coherent, his handling was more vivacious, his colour less monotonous, and his management of light and shadow far more significant. Precocious as he was in his youth, Nasmyth matured slowly, and it is more than likely that had he lived ten years longer he would have taken a higher place in our school than he has. He died in Lambeth on August 17th, 1831. A thunderstorm came on during his last moments, and at his own request, he was raised in bed to look at it. In this attitude, and with the lightning flashing before his eyes, he drew his last breath.

Nasmyth is plentifully represented in the National Gallery, but not one of the seven pictures there collected shows him quite at his best. The finest in quality, perhaps, is the very small landscape etched by M. Massé. It is only seven inches and three quarters high by ten wide, but the subject is so well arranged and so full, that the reproduction looks like that of a large picture. In this and in all the other examples in Trafalgar Square, his colour is bituminous and conventional; but he did not always fall into that mistake. I have seen pictures by Nasmyth, notably a distant view of St. Albans, also, but in a less degree, a view of Edinburgh from the neighbourhood of Craigmillar Castle, and another of some south Scottish valley, with its grey stone townlet, its hanging birch-woods, and its hurrying river, in all of which a fine freshness of colour was combined with effective simplicity of arrangement. More almost than any other painter of his rank Nasmyth gives one the notion of a man who would have gained enormously by a wider experience, by travelling, by reading books, by talking to his fellow-men. His work is never empty. It is full of thought, and care, and even love; but of fancy, of power to invent, it is almost destitute, and for a defect of that sort the only cure is to see and to learn as much as possible. For this, in his short and busy life, he took no time.

Akin in some ways to the art of Nasmyth was that of David Octavius Hill, who was

born at Perth in 1802. His father, a bookseller, sent him to Edinburgh to study under Andrew Wilson, at the Trustees' Academy. In 1823 he exhibited his first pictures, although some years earlier he had published a series of Perthshire views lithographed by himself, which had very considerable merit. For a time Hill seemed to aim at being a figure-painter. Several of his youthful efforts were Wilkie-isms, and in later life he painted *The First Meeting of the Free Church, in Tanfield*, which now hangs in the Presbytery in Edinburgh. For the latter half of his career, however, he devoted himself mainly, almost exclusively, to landscape. Among his best pictures were *The Ruins of Dunfermline Palace, Edinburgh from Mons Meg, Windsor Castle, Summer Evening*, and *The Valley of the Nith*. As a colourist Hill had much to learn, but his design had much grace, and in such things as the topographical drawings for the Waverley Novels, this quality makes up for the absence of



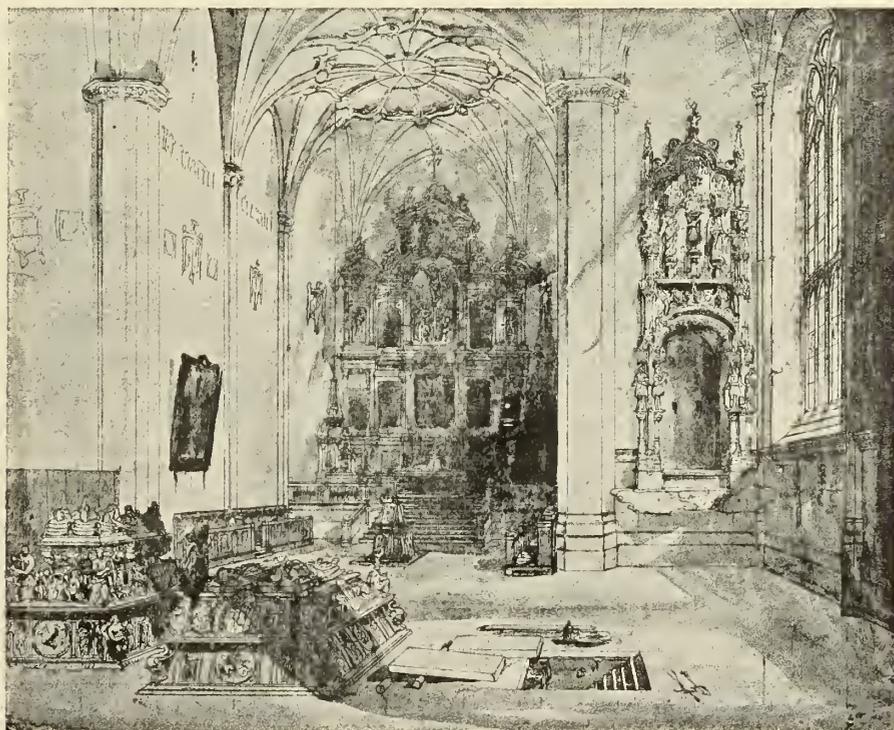
VIEW OF AYR. BY D. O. HILL.

many others. In 1841 Hill published a set of sixty landscapes under the title 'The Land of Burns,' one of which is here reproduced. Eleven years before, he had been elected, first a Member, and then Secretary, of the Royal Scottish Academy, a post he filled for nearly forty years. He died in 1870, having long suffered from weak health.

A name better known in England than that of D. O. Hill is Horatio Macculloch, very few of whose works, however, are seen on this side of the Border. Macculloch was born in Glasgow in 1805. Very little is known as to how he came to be a painter, but he is said to have been the pupil of one Knox, an obscure Glaswegian. We are told, too, that in early life he had many painful struggles to win a subsistence. About 1825 he was employed by W. H. Lizars to colour Selby's 'Ornithology,' and the well-known work on Anatomy by Dr. Lizars. He remained with Lizars for a year or two, and then went back to his native place, whence he sent pictures to the exhibitions of the Glasgow Dilettanti Society. In 1829 he began to exhibit with the Royal Scottish Academy, and in 1834 was elected an Associate; this honour being followed by the R. S. A.-ship in 1838. From this time forward Macculloch always had several pictures in the Exhibition, and it may safely be said that almost to the day of his death he remained the most popular landscape-painter

in Scotland. His subjects were almost exclusively Scottish. The lakes of the Highlands and the lowland rivers were his favourite themes. He composed his pictures with skill, but his colour was poor, his methods unsafe, and his sense of light and atmosphere insufficient to make up for his defects. Macculloch died in 1867.

A truer artist than either of these was John Adam Houston, who was born in Wales, of Scottish parents, in 1813. He was educated at the Trustees' Academy, and afterwards studied for a time both in France and Germany. During the chief years of his activity, namely, from 1840 to 1858, he lived in Edinburgh, whence he constantly sent pictures to the Royal Academy and other London exhibitions, including the Institute, of which he was elected an Associate in 1874 and a Member in 1879. In 1842 Houston became an Associate, and in 1845 a full Member, of the Royal Scottish Academy. He died in London in 1884.



CHAPEL OF THE KINGS, AT GRANADA, WITH TOMBS OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA. FROM A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING AT SOUTH KENSINGTON BY DAVID ROBERTS.

I mention him here in spite of his dates, because on the whole his art is that of a generation ago. He was a good colourist, and his figure pictures, which are numerous, show many striking qualities of design. *The Good Samaritan*, his diploma picture as an R.S.A., is now in the National Gallery at Edinburgh. It is a small, carefully painted picture. More artistic than anything else he did, perhaps, are his water-colour landscapes. These are well composed, warm and luminous, and more modern in character than the rest of his work.

It is time now to turn to an artist in a different *genre* from those of whom I have yet spoken. But different as were the subjects on which he worked, David Roberts brought to their treatment much the same qualities as those other Scotchmen of his time displayed. He was no colourist, and he had an indifferent sense of light and air; but as a composer, whether of line or of mass, he was excellent, while his sense of subordination, his power to select the elements of a picture and to fuse them into an organic whole, was very great. Roberts was born at Stockbridge, Edinburgh, in 1796. In early boyhood he showed a strong predilection for drawing, and, with good judgment on the part of his parents, was placed with one Beugo, a house-painter and decorator, where he would at once learn a

trade and have a chance of developing his artistic capabilities. He finished his time with Beugo, and then turned his attention to scene-painting, working first in Glasgow and afterwards in Edinburgh. The first pictures he exhibited were sent, in 1822, to the Edinburgh Exhibition, the forerunner of the Royal Scottish Academy. These were all architectural pieces. The address he then gave was 'Theatre Royal, Edinburgh;' but in the same year he was engaged to paint scenery for Drury Lane, and migrated to London. In 1824 he was painting at the rival house in Covent Garden; and in the same year he paid his first visit to the Continent, wandering about the coast towns of Normandy, and painting some of the finest of their Gothic remains. Two years later, in 1826, his first picture appeared on the Academy walls. It was *A Rouen Cathedral*. In 1828 he painted *The Exodus of the Israelites*, and sent it to Suffolk Street, to which Exhibition he was faithful for some six or seven years. After that he gradually ceased his contributions, resigned his membership, and sought the honours of the Academy. He became A.R.A. in 1839, and R.A. two years later. Before this he had visited nearly every country of Western Europe in quest of subjects, as well as Syria and Egypt. Italy he never saw till 1851, in which year he also visited the Austrian capital. For the last years of his life he remained at home and painted English scenes. He died suddenly of apoplexy on November 25th, 1864.

As an artist, David Roberts shone rather by the quality than the extent of his powers. His range was narrow. He had scarcely a trace of invention. His colour, as a rule, was very poor in quality, reminding us rather of the scene-painter's pot than of the oil-painter's palette; while as for atmosphere, the best equivalent he could devise for it was a mechanical degradation of tint. And yet, so far as it goes, his work is always artistic. He composed well. His sense of architectural effect was fine, and his drawing of detail suggestive. His colour was for the most part harmonious, and sometimes, in his best work—in his Spanish pictures, for instance—not deficient in warmth. Of his defects as a colourist, his use of cobalt is characteristic. Valuable as that pigment is when broken up with others, it is a disagreeable blue when left to itself. Roberts so used it, and the note it struck was often the ruin of his work as colour. His predilection for it was founded rather on practical than artistic considerations. I have heard a story in this connexion which may be either true or *trovato*. It is at least probable. Roberts was holding forth to some party of artists, C. R. Leslie among them, on the merits of his favourite. 'It is the finest colour out,' he declared; 'it will stand damp, it will stand gas, it will stand cleaning; there's nothing like it!' 'I'll tell you what it won't stand,' retorted Leslie. 'What's that?' cried Roberts. 'It won't stand looking at!' Cobalt, in oil, has a hot vibration about it that is suggestive of anything rather than the immeasurable depths of transparency it is too often used to render.

The periods in the *œuvre* of Roberts correspond to the influences under which he came. Down to 1838, his subjects were all taken from Western Europe, and their treatment was influenced to some extent by the Dutch ideas in vogue at home. The *Interior of the Cathedral at Burgos*, in the National Gallery, here engraved, is a typical example. In chiaroscuro it is evidently modelled on Rembrandt, while the workmanship, as a whole, is fat and broad, and the colour luminous. In 1838 came the painter's visit to the East, after which he painted more broadly, thinly, and coldly. An excellent example of this second period is the *Ruins of Baalbec*. This was painted in 1840, and bought by Mr. Bicknell for 250*l.* At his sale it fetched more than three times that price. From 1851 to 1860, Roberts took his themes from Italy and the south of Europe. His style was still broad, but his colour became colder than before, an unpleasant blackness creeping into it. In his last years he confined himself practically to English scenes. Death interrupted him while engaged on the sixth of a series of views on the Thames. At the present moment Roberts is out of fashion, and it is not likely that he will ever again be in it. But the sterling



Land. Roberts & A. Pond

E. Murray sc.

Burgos Cathedral.

qualities in his work will always preserve his name from oblivion, and his better productions will keep their place in our national collections.*

David Roberts is the only painter of architecture on my list. Of the Scottish portrait-painters who flourished in his time, the most distinguished was Sir John Watson-Gordon. He was the son of a naval officer called Watson, who counted kin with Sir Walter Scott; while by his mother he was related to Robertson, the historian, and Falconer, the now forgotten poet of the 'Shipwreck.' His father intended him for his own profession; but allowed him for a time to study under Graham in the Trustees' Academy, where he progressed so fast that, when the time came for a final decision to be made, he was allowed to try his luck at art. His uncle, who was afterwards the first President of the Royal Scottish Academy, was well established as a portrait-painter; and his success no doubt confirmed the desire of the nephew. The only teaching young Watson had was acquired under Graham, and from the example of Raeburn and of his own uncle, both of whom he used to watch at work. He never studied abroad. He exhibited for the first time in 1808. The picture he then sent to what was, in fact, the first exhibition of modern pictures held in Edinburgh, was a scene from the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel;' and for some years he continued to treat *genre* subjects. It was not long, however, before he discovered that his vocation was to portraits, and more especially to the portraits of men with masculine heads. In 1826 he added the name of Gordon to his patronymic; chiefly, it was said, to distinguish him from the other Watsons who were then at work in the Scottish capital. He first exhibited in the English Academy in 1827, and after 1839 was a regular contributor. On the death of Sir William Allan in 1850, he was elected President of the Scottish Academy, was knighted, and appointed the Queen's Limner for Scotland. A year later he was elected a Royal Academician; and on the 1st of June, 1864, he died.

Art more unassertive than that of Sir John Watson-Gordon it would be impossible to find. His aim seems to have been suppression of self. In his best work the head of his sitter holds its own by quiet truth. There is no insistence, no accent, no display of *facture*. To the careless eye it may seem that there is no 'treatment;' that, in fact, there is nothing but imitation. But in spite of all this quietude, every sitter painted by Watson-Gordon has an individuality. We can know him as well as if we had the man himself before us. Within the last few years the only example possessed by the National Gallery has been 'lent' to some other collection; but as I write these lines, I have perhaps the finest thing the painter ever did in vivid remembrance. This is the half-length of David Cox, which has been all this summer in the Jubilee Exhibition at Manchester. It belongs to the Midland Institute at Birmingham. In the shrewd head of the old landscape-painter Gordon had exactly the right subject, and he did it justice. Of his eleven pictures at Edinburgh, in the National Gallery, none are quite so good as this.

A portrait of Watson-Gordon himself represents, in this same collection, a painter who was once almost as well known as the P. R. S. A. John Graham Gilbert was a native of Glasgow, where he first saw the light in 1794. In 1818, a little late, he went to London, and became a student at the Academy. There he studied for his full term, after which he worked for two years in Italy; and then, in 1827, set up as a portrait-painter in the Scottish capital. He was a success from the first; more especially did he win a name for being able to paint a pretty woman better than any native Scot had done before. In 1834 he moved to Glasgow, where he varied the monotony of making pictures by collecting them. His collection was left to the city of Glasgow by his widow; and now forms no inconsiderable part of the Corporation Gallery, one of the best provincial collections in Europe. Graham Gilbert died at Glasgow in 1866. For Londoners his art is represented by a half-

* The Catalogue of the National Gallery quotes the prices given by Mr. Bicknell for seven pictures by Roberts, and sets against them the prices bid for the same works in 1863, when the collection was dispersed. The increase was nearly 430 per cent.

length of *Sir Walter Scott* in the National Portrait Gallery. That, however, is not a fair example; and the commonplace quality in his conceptions is often redeemed by refinement in the management of feature, and by good, occasionally even by fine, colour.

Another artist of much the same calibre was Colvin Smith, who won a considerable reputation by his male portraits. These are well drawn and modelled, and, in spite of great simplicity, are full of truth and vitality. The best known of them all is one of *Sir Walter Scott*, of which Smith is said to have painted twenty replicas. For seven of these



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AS CHANCELLOR OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY.
FROM A DRAWING BY SIR FRANCIS GRANT.

Scott gave sittings. Smith died in 1875, at the age of eighty. From Colvin Smith to William Bonnar the transition is easy. The latter was born in 1800 and died in 1853. That comparatively short life was divided into three stages. In the first he was a house-decorator; in the second, a painter of domesticities; in the third, and most successful, a portrait-painter. The Scottish National Gallery possesses his own portrait by himself, and one of G. M. Kemp, the ill-fated architect of the Scott Monument.

I now come to two men who derive much of their importance from the fact that one became President of the 'Royal,' the other of the 'Royal Scottish,' Academy.

Sir Daniel Macnee was born at Fintray, Stirlingshire, in 1806, and died in 1882. He received his first lessons in art from the above-named Glaswegian, John Knox, but seems to have already been winning his bread in his seventeenth year. Like Horatio Macculloch, his fellow-pupil, he was employed by Lizars, the engraver, to colour anatomical plates. At this he worked for some years, occupying his spare hours, however, in making chalk

portraits, and by their means building up a connexion which afterwards led to the monopoly of his time by portrait-painting. Macnee was a great conversationalist. As a story-teller he had few equals. I have heard good judges say he had none; and certainly on the one or two occasions that I have found myself in his company, humour bubbled from him like water from an abundant spring. It was of that subtle kind which forbids record or reproduction. Macnee would tell a story that would make every one that heard it laugh till their tears flowed and their sides ached, and yet it would defy repetition, or even recollection. If Scotchmen had really deserved the character nailed to them by Charles Lamb, Sydney Smith, and their brother-libellers, he would have been the most isolated of men. Most of his career was passed among the merchants of Glasgow, but on the death of Sir George Harvey, in 1876, he was unanimously elected P. R. S. A., and moved to the capital, where his success was, if possible, even greater than in Glasgow. He died in 1882, and all Edinburgh followed him to the grave.

With little enough of Macnee's conversational powers, Sir Francis Grant had much in common with the Scottish President, both in art and character. Without being a painter of the first, or even of the second class, he achieved both success in his *métier* and the highest honour his fellow-workmen had to give, by talents which won him popularity wherever he went. This is scarcely the place to dwell upon his career at length, for his painting had little enough to do with the main stream of either English or Scottish art. But I may be allowed to note the chief events in his career. Grant was born in Edinburgh in 1803. He was the fourth son of Mr. Francis Grant, of Kilgraston, Perthshire. He was educated at Harrow, and for a time studied law, relieving its tedium, however, by visits to Melton and other sporting centres, in the course of which his patrimony disappeared. He then took up art, to which he had been always attached, in real earnest, and soon had as many commissions for portraits as he could easily discharge. In 1842 he was elected an Associate, in 1851 a full Member, and in 1866 President, of the Royal Academy. He died, somewhat suddenly, on October 8th, 1878, and was buried at Melton Mowbray. Grant's best works were his hunting scenes, but now and again he made a success in pictures of another class, in which the knowledge he gained in the hunting-field could be utilised. Such a picture is *The Advance of the Guards at the Alma*, with the Duke of Cambridge and his staff, mounted, at the head of the column. One of the cleverest things he ever did is the group of thirty-seven equestrian portraits known as *The Melton Hunt*, which belongs to the Duke of Wellington.

VI.

William Kidd; Sir George Harvey; Robert Scott Lauder; John Eckford Lauder; David Scott; William Dyce; John Phillip.

IT is curious to see in what artistic matters the experience of one country is confirmed by that of another. In nothing do we find the same lines more closely followed than in the relation borne to the chiefs of a school by those who are in the second rank of it. Down to minute characteristics, the disciples of Wilkie in Scotland afford a parallel to those of Ostade in Holland, and of Teniers and Brauwer in Flanders. It is not only that their work bears much the same proportion as to merit to that of their masters; it falls into the same errors, and, where it excels, it excels in the same fashion. As examples of what I mean, I may name Jan Miense Molenaer, among the Dutchmen; David Ryckaert (the third), among the Flemings; and William Kidd, among the Scots. Each of these men had a freedom, an *abandon*, which was not entirely consistent with true artistic balance. Each painted more thinly, more largely, more monotonously, and with less care for depth and unity, than his leader, and each as a colourist fell into the same defect of over-redness and heat. In each, too, we can divine a power he never contrived to fully display. William Kidd, with whom our immediate business lies, was born in Scotland about 1790. In early youth he was apprenticed to a house-painter in Edinburgh. That trade, however, he did not prosecute when his 'time was out,' but turned to art of a higher order. The productions of Alexander Carse, the forerunner of Wilkie, and of Wilkie himself, had excited his ambition, and coming to London while still very young, he devoted himself to work of a similar class. He first exhibited at the Academy in 1817, and down to 1840 was seldom absent. In 1849 he was elected an honorary member of the Royal Scottish Academy, after which he sent his pictures mainly to that body. Towards the end of his life he fell, or rather sank deeper than before, into financial embarrassment. All through life he had ordered his affairs with eccentricity, and in his last days he became a pensioner of the Royal Academy. He died in London on Christmas Day, 1863.

Kidd's pictures deal mostly with the more homely scenes of that peasant life which is not the lowest. The humours of the labourer, of the hedger and ditcher and his bedraggled mate, he did not care for. But the peasant with a cosy cottage, where a certain comfort surrounds the perennial making of love and butter, excited his easy interest. He painted him with a broad, free brush, taking less care than he ought to get him right in place and shape, often loading him unreasonably with paint, and seldom failing to overdo his healthy *rougeur*. Kidd's pictures are almost, if not quite, unknown in galleries. They are to be met with pretty frequently in the dealers' shops, where they are often called by other names. I must confess that only at rare intervals have I found myself confronted by one that deserved a place even in the most liberal 'National Gallery of British Art.'

Between the work of William Kidd and that of Sir George Harvey there is sufficient community, in kind, to justify their inclusion in the same class. But no greater contrast than that presented by their lives, and, in some ways, by their work, could be easily imagined. Kidd was vulgar, reckless, and a bit of a genius, while Harvey was brimming over with tranquil judgment. In the one man's work painter-like qualities peep out in spite of carelessness and false artistic principles; in the other's, honesty and care are unable to

hide the essential defect of inspiration. Sir George Harvey, the fourth President of the Royal Scottish Academy,* was born at St. Ninian's, near Stirling, in 1806. Like so many artists of his generation and of those before it, his profession was a second choice. In his boyhood he was apprenticed to a bookseller, and it was not until seventeen years had passed over his head that he became a student of art in earnest. In 1823 he gained admission to the Trustees' Academy, where he made such rapid progress that, when the project of a Scottish Academy was mooted three years later, he was invited to become an Associate, and on its definitive formation a full member. With characteristic judgment Harvey saw that the Scottish novels, as 'Waverley' and its successors were then commonly called, had created a public for a certain class of picture, and soon after his election to the new Royal Scottish Academy he set to work to paint scenes from that long struggle of religions which had destroyed Scottish art. In 1830 he exhibited *Covenanters Preaching*; in 1831, *Covenanters' Baptism*; in 1835, *The Battle of Drumclog*. Aided by good engravings his pictures became known all over Scotland, and he one of the most popular of Scottish artists. In 1843 he exhibited for the first time in London, sending *An Incident in the Life of Napoleon* to the Academy. Three years before he had painted the *Covenanters' Communion*, a replica of which hangs in the National Gallery at Edinburgh. The 'disruption' of 1843 gave Harvey another chance of profiting by the passion of the moment, and he painted the *Quitting the Manse*, which has also found a place in the Edinburgh Gallery. Of all Harvey's pictures, however, the best known and the most popular in his native country is *The Curlers*. It was finely engraved by William Howison (to whom the *Covenanters' Communion* had also been entrusted), and so carried wherever Scotsmen get to—which means into every corner of the world. *Shakespeare before Sir Thomas Lucy*, *Bunyan in Bedford Jail*, *The Castaway*, were also among his better things. In the later part of his career Harvey gave his attention more and more to landscape. This he treated with much poetical breadth and truth, and with far less of that heaviness of hand which is a blot on his painting of figures.

As a draughtsman, Sir George Harvey's defects are a want of grace in his forms, and of distribution in his arabesques. His figures are squat, thick-set, and muffled in their clothes, while in too many cases they seem crowded together like frightened sheep. As a colourist he is without 'oneness.' He has no idea of preserving the purity of a tint, and of keeping it in its place by consummate harmonisation. His colour, though often enough transparent, is monotonously low in tone. His defects are those which come in no slight degree from a narrow horizon and the absence of a great tradition. Had he worked in London or Paris it is probable that he would have won a higher place for himself than he actually holds. Sir George Harvey's interest was not confined to the practice of his art. In 1870 he published an interesting account of the early struggles of the Scottish Academy; he was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, and contributed now and then to its 'Transactions.'

With Harvey we leave for a time the original stem of Scottish art. None of the painters we have yet mentioned contrived entirely to get rid of the provincialism which narrow experience forces upon the most gifted. Even in the portraits of Raeburn and in Wilkie's sketches for his early pictures—the finest things Scotland had so far produced—sympathies cramped by contracted horizons are to be traced. In the now too much neglected art of Robert Scott Lauder a larger style appears, which is to some extent to be accounted for by the course taken by his education as an artist. Born at Silvermills, near Edinburgh, in 1803, he manifested a strong tendency towards art while yet a child. In this he found no encouragement at home, but accident made him acquainted with David Roberts, who fostered his bent so far as he could, and gave him his first lessons in the use of colour. While still very young Lauder entered the Trustees' Academy, then

* It is a little remarkable that while the Royal Academy has had only seven Presidents in 120 years, the Royal Scottish Academy has had six in less than half that time.

directed by Andrew Wilson, and there he remained for some five years. In 1825 he came to London, where he worked from the marbles in the British Museum, and from the life at a private academy. In 1826 he returned to Edinburgh, re-entered the school of the Trustees, then directed by Sir William Allan, and won the friendship of 'Thomson of Duddingston.' In 1833 he married Thomson's daughter, and, taking his wife with him, started for a tour on the Continent. The tour became a sojourn, and it was not until five years had passed and the great masters of Rome, Florence, and Venice, had been studied at home, that he again set foot in England. In 1838 he established himself in London, where his success was considerable. In 1850 he was appointed Master of the Trustees' Academy, and settled finally in Edinburgh. In 1861 he had a stroke of paralysis, and from that time till his death nine years later he was unable to paint. He was elected a member of the Scottish Academy in 1830.

The weakness of Lauder's art lies in a want of feeling for composition. His pictures are often crowded with figures, and yet in arrangement he had little skill. He was fond of painting ambitious subjects from the Bible, such as *Christ Walking on the Waters*, *The Supper in the House of Levi*, and *Christ teaching Humility*—the last is in the Scottish National Gallery—but he seldom contrived to give them the forceful unity that springs from the due subordination of parts. On the other hand, he had an eye for beauty and a fine sense of colour. It may sound a brave thing to say, but it is nevertheless true, that in Lauder's better works there are passages which come near Delacroix in rich resonance of tint. Now and then the likeness is so great that it can scarcely be accidental. During the five years Lauder spent on the Continent, the leader of the Romanticists was only emerging into fame. It was not until 1832 that Thiers contrived to get him a commission from the French government. But Lauder may well have seen some of his early works, and by the time he was on his way home to London in 1838, several of the pictures in the Luxembourg were complete. Delacroix has now been erected into a sort of fetish by a certain class of critics, mostly Frenchmen, who credit him with powers over colour for which there is scarcely sufficient justification. To them it would seem sheer blasphemy to couple any modern name with his, and especially one so obscure as the caprice of fashion has left that of Robert Scott Lauder. But the great secret of Delacroix, the combination of force with subtlety of colour by the clever use of optical contrasts, does in fact find more than an echo in the work of the Scottish painter. In the Edinburgh Gallery Lauder is represented by the picture already named, and by, among other things, a portrait of his father-in-law, Thomson of Duddingston.

James Eckford Lauder had an easier entry into Art than his brother Robert. Born in 1812, the experience of one older by nine years than himself smoothed away many difficulties. He began his probation at the Trustees' Academy, but in 1834 he joined his brother in Italy, and worked hard until the latter returned to England. In 1838 he settled in Edinburgh, where his work at once attracted notice. In 1839 he was elected an Associate, and in 1846 a full Member, of the Scottish Academy. In 1847 he sent a picture, *The Parable of Forgiveness*, to the competition in Westminster Hall, and won a prize of 200*l.* But perhaps his best, certainly his best-known, production was *The Ten Virgins*. It was engraved by Lumb Stocks, for the Association for the promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland. J. E. Lauder died in Edinburgh in 1869. As an artist he was on the whole inferior to his brother, but he almost equalled him in colour.

I have already had occasion to speak of one Robert Scott, as the best engraver in Edinburgh eighty years ago and the master of John Burnet. On the 10th or 12th of October, 1806, he became the father of a son who was destined to be a sort of Scottish Haydon. David Scott was born on one of the two days I have named in a 'land' in the Old Town of Edinburgh. The land was at the top of a lofty house overlooking the roof

of St. Giles's, and consisted of dwelling-rooms and the workshops in which Scott *père* worked at his trade among pupils and assistants. Robert Scott was a Calvinist of the sternest sort, and shortly after his son David was born his father's gloomy turn of mind was made more sombre than ever by domestic calamity: of five sons, four were carried off by death within a few days of each other, and David alone was left. In later years, two more sons and a daughter came to fill the empty nursery, but they could not heal the wound in the parents' hearts, and till the end of his days the father lived with his lost children in the narrow heaven of the Scottish Reformation. Mr. W. B. Scott, in his memoir of his brother,* describes the domestic arrangements of a home, in which 'merriment was but another name for folly.' David's education was gained partly from his father, partly at a day school, where he learned Latin well and a little Greek. In the evening his time was given up to drawing. As the eldest, the most gifted, and his father's favourite, he had facilities which the others had to do without. 'The light and the box of water-colours were at David's command alone, not to be touched under instant and grievous penalties. A small windowless room was set apart for the library; of this he kept the key, and admitted the others as candle-bearers only.' In this room lived a copy of Blair's *Grave*, with Blake's illustrations, by which David's mind was strongly and permanently affected. In his early years he seems to have been free to cherish thoughts of a future passed as a painter; but, about the time he was nineteen, the father's health gave way, and the elder son was compelled to drive the graver hard to keep the wolf from the door. This application to work that left no room for his imaginings seems to have pressed severely upon him. He has left a sketch, inscribed 'Character of David Scott, 1826,' in which he is shown sitting at the engraving table with hands clenched and despair in his face. Other productions of the same sort are extant, and seem to betray a condition of mind for which, in truth, there was little excuse; for as early as 1827, when he was only twenty-one years of age, we find him inaugurating the 'Edinburgh Life Academy Association,' and setting to work on a huge picture of 'The Flight of Lot.' Three years later he was elected a full Member of the Royal Scottish Academy, after being an Associate of the Institution. In 1832 he visited Italy, where he spent two years, mostly in Rome. Venice he stayed at for a while, and there he wrote some lines in his *Journal*, which I shall presently have to quote. Raphael's 'Bible' he thought trifling, and even with Buonarroti himself, who afterwards developed into his deity, he was at first disappointed.

In 1834 David Scott returned to Edinburgh, and at once embarked on the troubled waters of 'high art.' He took a large studio at Easter Daley House, and there painted most of his important works. In 1842 he sent in two cartoons to the great competition at Westminster, a *Drake witnessing the Destruction of the Armada*, and *Wallace Defending Scotland*. Neither attracted much attention, and some specimens of work in fresco, which he sent to the second competition, met with the same neglect. In these disappointments, however, Scott had plenty of fellow-sufferers, and he seems to have borne them with more equanimity than Haydon bore his. In person Scott seems to have looked his character. 'He was a little above the middle size, slender but not emaciated, lean and stript for the contest, but full of vigour tempered by nervous irritability. His face was pale and thin, but lighted up with poetical intelligence.' Such is his description by his happier brother, Mr. William Bell Scott, who has left an etching of the painter's head as it appeared after his death, which occurred on March 5th, 1849.

For the artist the first condition is to see things as they are. Above all other men, he requires a mind that is sane. His individual likings, even his eccentricities, must be within his control. He must know they are there, and recognise the line of separation

* 'Memoir of David Scott, R.S.A., containing his *Journal in Italy*, *Notes on Art*, and other papers. Edinburgh, 1850.)

between the impressions they lead to and actual reality. As in the art, for example, of Rembrandt, we must divine a sound, even a severe judgment, behind his strongest assertion of personality. He must be able to look even at his own work from the outside. The moment he is carried away by it, as David Scott and the Englishman to whom I have ventured to compare him, Benjamin Robert Haydon, were carried away, he becomes no longer an artist, but a blind enthusiast, to whom success and failure are matters of chance.

All art is valued for its evidence of power and temperament. Subtle health of sense and fineness of brain make up the perfect man, and no completer machine for their display can be conceived than the higher forms of art. And each of the two must have its share. The feelings must not be allowed to oppress the judgment, nor the judgment to chill the feelings. The work of art, in fact, should re-echo the balance between intellect and sense which should exist in its creator. All the greatest artists have been pre-eminently sane. Shakespeare, Goethe, Michelangelo, Titian, Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Velasquez, in none of these was there a ghost of that unreasoning *furor* in which genius is too often supposed to exist. 'A work of art should be subjective;' by a mistake as to the meaning of that very true assertion, the idea that eccentricity helps art has too often been accepted. What it means is that a work of art should be the outcome of the real feelings and intellectual perceptions of the man that makes it, to be accepted or rejected according as those are great and sane or not. Now, it is clear that neither the accidental effects won when the judgment is sleeping, nor those arising from technical incapacity, express the man. It is also clear that ill-balanced art, whether in a picture, or a building, or a book, betrays some defect in the mental constitution or sensuous apprehension of the artist. This we may choose to forgive in consideration of some great quality which lies beside it, as we forgive Blake's madness for the beauty of his sanity. But the men to whom such indulgence has to be shown are so far not artists. They are comets, not fitting into the cosmic framework at all, dazzling sometimes by the very blaze of their egoism, but not helping in that quest of truth which is the business of us all, and of artists more than the rest.

I have said all this because even yet, although the tendency is less than it was, people are inclined to speak as if men like Haydon and David Scott were martyrs to public stupidity. The truth is, that though endowed with active minds and feelings sensitive to exaggeration, they were without that reciprocity between brain and sense in which artistic judgment consists. Aspiration they mistook for power, and impossibilities for feats within their reach. The following quotation from the journal Scott kept in Italy is enough by itself to prove that with all his powers, which, *as a painter*, were much greater than those of Haydon, he must, under any circumstances, have had a hard struggle with himself before he could become an artist. 'Tintoretto, in every respect, is frequently wide of individuality. Titian—I ascend—the venerable father of these and many more, is at times very grand in design. The *Assumption of the Virgin* is one of the greatest works in painting for ponderous power, driving colour to a height which has nothing at all to rival it. But, oh! what is to be seen here to fulfil what painting ought to and can perform? Nothing. Titian is an old man without imagination in all his works; Tintoretto, a blind Polyphemus; Veronese, a Doge's Page.' The painter of the Louvre *Entombment*, an 'old man without imagination in all his works!' Scott, though he afterwards became something of a colourist himself, did not understand that a painter's imagination can be shown in the quality of a tint or the hang of a robe. But the whole passage shows that inability to be lucid, and that tendency to mistake the nature of personal impressions, which betray desires that have found no vent.

From all this it may be thought that to me David Scott seems nothing but a failure. I should not like, however, to leave that impression. In some of his pictures there is fine colour, in others pictorial fitness is combined with vigour of invention, while in all, the

sense that he was at least in earnest, prevents our passing them by with a shrug. Technically, his finest work is, perhaps, the *Duke of Gloucester carried into the Watergate of Calais*. From the imaginative standpoint his grandest conception is *Vasco de Gama and the Spirit of the Cape*, which is nearly as fine as its name. Even in this great canvas, however,* want of judgment is conspicuous. In many of the faces which are meant to suggest terror and awe, the contortions are such as nothing but physical agony could produce.

A greater contrast to David Scott than that offered by the next man to be noticed could scarcely be imagined. William Dyce, the painter of the Queen's Robing Room at Westminster, was born at Aberdeen in 1806. His father, a physician, sent his son to Marischal College, where he duly took his A.M. degree at the early age of seventeen. In



STUDY FOR A JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON. BY W. DYCE.

1823 he entered the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh, migrating thence to London about two years later; and then, after giving but a short trial to the system pursued in the schools of the Royal Academy, passing on to Italy, where he completed his education in Florence and Rome.

In 1826 Dyce returned to Edinburgh, and twelve months later sent his first picture, a *Bacchus nursed by the Nymphs*, to the Royal Academy. Finding that he had still something to learn, he determined on another stay abroad, whence he despatched to England a *Virgin and Child*, the first of his works to attract much notice. After an absence this time of two years he settled in Edinburgh, where he remained for the best part of a decade, painting portraits and landscapes, but devoted in spirit to what is called art of a higher class. In 1835 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy, an honour which he afterwards resigned.

During his Italian studies Dyce had paid much attention to ornament, and in 1837 he published a *brochure* on 'Schools of Design as a part of State Education.' At the time discussions of the sort were much in the air, and the Government was looking about for a

* It now hangs in the Trinity House, Leith.

head for the schools it had established. The post was offered to Dyce, and accepted, his first duty being to make a tour of inspection abroad and to report on the Continental systems of art education. His report was issued as a Parliamentary paper. In 1842 his office was changed to Inspector of Provincial Art Schools, which he held for two years. In 1844 he was appointed to another post of a similar kind, which he finally gave up four years later. His ideas as to the schools of design had not borne fruit, and from 1848 onwards he restricted himself to the work of an artist.

In 1843 Dyce was among the competitors for employment on the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. To the gathering in Westminster Hall he contributed a large cartoon, *The Consecration of Archbishop Parker in Lambeth Palace*, which is a very good example of the class of art to which it belongs. It failed, however, to catch the eye of

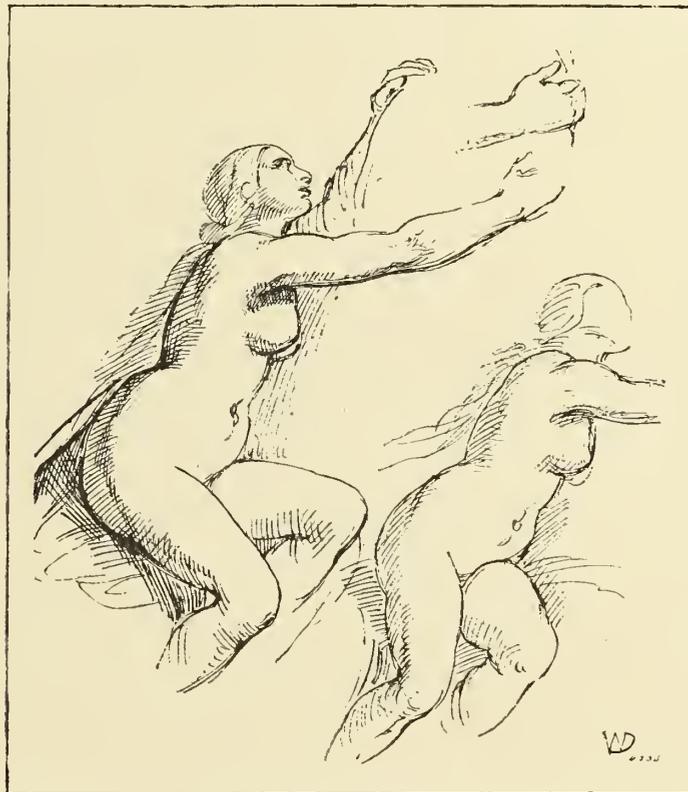


STUDY BY W. DYCE.

the judges, and it was not until the next competition, twelve months later, that its author won a premium. This time the subject was *The Baptism of St. Ethelbert*, and Dyce was commissioned to repeat his work in fresco in the House of Lords. When this was finished he obtained the much more important commission to decorate the Queen's Robing Room with a series of frescoes from the legend of King Arthur. Of these he only lived to complete five, each of which is named after some knightly virtue. *Hospitality* is the admission of Sir Tristram to the Round Table; *Religion*, the vision of Sir Galahad and his company; *Mercy*, Sir Gawain swearing to be merciful, and never to be against ladies; *Generosity*, Sir Launcelot sparing King Arthur; and *Courtesy*, Sir Tristram harping to Ysult. In the intervals of painting these monumental works, Dyce produced a considerable number of easel pictures, of which the best, perhaps, were his *King Joash shooting the Arrows of Deliverance*, his *Jacob and Rachel*, his *St. John leading home the Virgin*, and his *George Herbert of Bemerton*. The painter died on February 10th, 1864, at Streatham, where he had passed the latter part of his life.

Dyce was one of those men who unite a very considerable artistic faculty with a clearness of wit that enables them to make the most of it. He drew well, he had a sense

of design and of style, and he managed colour with skill, if not with any depth of sympathy. His best works are the Robing Room wall-pictures, and the best of these are *Courtesy* and *Religion*. In both, colour is used with a purity and a force of contrast almost unprecedented in mural work. As a colourist, Dyce combined qualities borrowed from the early Flemings with others, of which Lorenzo di Credi, perhaps, affords the best example. He set primary tints in juxtaposition one with another, in well-calculated masses, but without any attempt to break them. His impasto is fused like enamel, his background often cold and too much detached from his figures. His really strong point is design. Nothing more graceful than his 'Yseult' in *Courtesy* could be readily conceived, and to grace it unites a womanly fulness and dignity which befits both the Queen and the woman



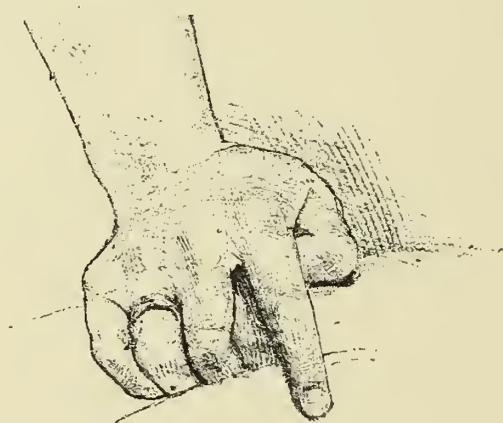
STUDY BY W. DYCE.

who loved more well than wisely. The whole ordinance, too, of the more ambitious picture, the *Religion*, shows the same sense of line and mass. The chief figure, no doubt, is borrowed from Raphael, just as Raphael borrowed his St. Paul from Filippino Lippi, but it is not spoilt in the borrowing. Carried out on a larger scale, and placed among ampler surroundings than it has in the Robing Room at Westminster, this fresco might by this time have taken the place it really deserves, at the head of all British effort in this direction, and above much that has won a far wider notoriety on the Continent. Many members of the Romano-German School have become famous who never did anything to approach these five pictures in artistic merit, and as much may be said, with even greater confidence, of many Frenchmen.

Dyce was as excellent with the pen as with the pencil. He was, too, a skilled musician, skilled, that is, in the *science* of music. In 1842-3 he published 'The Book of Common Prayer, with the ancient music set to it at the Reformation,' which brought him a gold medal from the King of Prussia. For an 'Essay on Magnetism' he won the Blackall prize at Aberdeen; while his writings on the fine arts included several pamphlets in which

aesthetic matters are reasoned upon with a clear-headed refinement none too common either in England or anywhere else. The keynote to these is to be found in a lecture upon the 'Theory of Art,' delivered at King's College, in 1844. In this he disentangles the confusion created by the belief that some essential difference exists between such arts as music and architecture on the one hand, and painting on the other; and does it with curious ease. The sketches here reproduced are very slight, but they are enough to afford some justification for what I have said as to Dyce's feeling for line, and also for what I might have said as to a peculiar faculty of his own for uniting austerity in the general effect of his art, with a readiness to accept nature at her least austere as material.

Among the painters contributed by Scotland to the roll of British artists, Dyce stands alone. His aims and his methods were alike foreign to the mass of his countrymen. One or two names, indeed, could be written down which to many readers would recall some faint echo, not of the beauties, but of the manner, of Dyce. But they belong to men in the third or fourth rank. Among those in the first, or near it, I cannot find one to put in the same class as the painter of Arthur and his Knights, or to serve as transition to the brother Aberdonian, with whom I must begin my seventh chapter.



STUDY BY W. DYCE.

VII.

John Phillip; James Cassie; William Simson; Edmund Thornton Crawford; Thomas Duncan; Alexander Christie; James Drummond; William Borthwick Johnstone.

JOHN PHILLIP was born in the granite city on April 19th, 1817, and died at Campden Hill scarcely fifty years later. Early in life he was placed with a house-painter in the most picturesque, and perhaps dirtiest, part of Aberdeen, the corner known as Wallace Nook. Here he was employed in grinding colours, and here, when his master was not looking, he painted his first picture, a copy from a 'Wallace' on a swinging sign at the other side of the street. Phillip's Cimabue was a Major Pryse Gordon, to whose house he was sent to repair a broken window. The work was to be done before Gordon came down to breakfast, but upon entering the room he found the window untouched, and the young glazier mounted on a chair and absorbed in a picture. Major Gordon's interest was touched, and he gave Phillip the first encouragement to become a painter he ever received.

In 1834 Phillip paid his first visit to London; paid it as a 'stowaway' on board the good brig *Manly*, whose master, Benzie, was an old friend of his father's. Benzie compelled his uninvited guest to take out his passage in work, so while the brig lay in the Thames, Phillip only contrived to have a single day free. This he spent in the exhibition at Somerset House. 'I was the first in,' he said, 'and they swept me out with the sawdust in the evening.' The same night he went back to the brig, and returned in her to Aberdeen. He afterwards painted the *Manly's* portrait, and gave it to her skipper.

Again at Aberdeen, Phillip contrived to get some instruction in the more mechanical parts of his art from a local 'face-painter' of the name of Forbes, and progressed so fast that Major Pryse Gordon introduced him to Lord Panmure, through whose generosity he was sent to London in 1836, and placed as a pupil with T. M. Joy, a forgotten pupil of Samuel Drummond. Twelve months later Phillip won admission to the Academy schools, and two years later still, in 1839, he sent in his first contribution to its exhibition. In 1840 he returned for a time to Aberdeen, where he painted portraits, but in 1846 was settled in London. Phillip's health, however, was far from robust, and in 1851 he was advised to make that sojourn in Spain which had so profound an effect on his art. He set up his easel at Seville, where he painted many sketches, began a few pictures, and frequented bull-fights like a Spaniard. In 1856-7 he again went to Spain, this time with Ansdell, and visited most of the more picturesque cities. The chief material results of his journey were the well-known pictures, *The Prison Window* and *Charity*. These had a success at the Academy, and their author was elected A.R.A. In the same year he was commissioned by the Queen, who had already become the owner of two of his Spanish pictures, to paint the *Marriage of the Princess Royal*. As to this commission I may tell a tale.

Throughout his life one of Phillip's most trusted friends was Mr. T. Oldham Barlow, R.A. To this friend he carried off the letter in which the Royal wishes were conveyed, begging for advice as to how he was to 'get out of it.' For flattering as they are, and great as may be the collateral advantages which spring from them, commissions to paint State ceremonies certainly shorten painters' lives. Phillip hated writing letters, and Mr. Barlow sat down to

concoct—thought the other—a judicious refusal. But when the letter was handed over to sign, it said yes! After some hard pressing, the signature was affixed, and Mr. Barlow hurried off to the post to make all sure. When he returned he found that Phillip had employed the minutes in making a rough sketch of the composition, which he never afterwards departed from. Of course, the usual delays took place in getting the picture finished. Much hunting of sitters had to be gone through before the heads were complete, and more than once the artist's patience was on the point of giving out. He must be forgiven, then, for his answer to the lady-in-waiting who told him with a smile that his work was approved, and that no doubt more orders would follow. 'One Royal Commission,' he retorted, 'is honour enough for any man!'

In 1859 Phillip was elected an Academician, and twelve months later he was again in Spain, visiting Madrid, Segovia, Toledo, Cordova, and, of course, Seville. In Seville he spent most of the half-year of his absence, and, by the time he turned his face homewards, had begun, and nearly finished, twenty-five important pictures, besides twenty small ones and a large number of water-colour drawings and sketches. At Madrid he copied several of the finest of the works of Velazquez. Two of these copies—the *Las Meninas* and the portrait of Martinez Montañés, the sculptor (which used to be called a portrait of Alonso Cano)—were afterwards bought by the Royal Academy, and now hang in the painting school at Burlington House. A third was bought by the Royal Scottish Academy, and placed in the National Gallery at Edinburgh: it is from the *Surrender of Breda*, the picture so famous as *Las Lanzas*. The amount of work done by Phillip during this last sojourn in Spain was extraordinary. The pace of his brush must have been almost as great as that to which the Neapolitan who had worked on the same country two centuries before owed his name of *Fa Presto*. To this rapidity is, no doubt, due a certain want of modelled substance in his later works, as well as an occasional contentment with the obvious in design.

One of the twenty-five pictures commenced during these last six months in Spain was Phillip's masterpiece, the *La Gloria*, which deals with the strange Spanish custom of holding an uproarious wake over little children when they die. *La Gloria* was exhibited at the Academy of 1864, where it created a great sensation. It is a double picture. On the right, the canvas is occupied by the wall of a modest Spanish house; through the doorway we see into a darkened room, in which the dead child is laid out in the dull glare of a candle or two, while, in the broad shadow of the house, the weeping mother refuses to join the dancers, who turn in the sunlight which fills the left of the canvas. Few things, as a rule, are more fatal to the success of any work of art than a divided interest. But here Phillip has not succumbed. The shadow, by which the sombre half of his work has its meaning enhanced, is won in the most natural way, while its junction with the Spanish sunlight which falls unbroken on the gaudy skirts of the dancers, is contrived with fine skill. Of the subject, as a subject, it would be easy to make more than Phillip made. The contrast between real woe and the light-heartedness which seizes upon any excuse for merry-making, could, without much difficulty, be set more vividly upon canvas than he has set it. But, as an essay in colour and chiaroscuro, *La Gloria* will hold its own with the work of almost any modern master. The brushing has the rich, easy fatness we should expect from a worshipper of Velazquez who had not been jaded by too much familiarity, or perverted by the practice of the modern studios of Spain. And even as story it has some fine passages: the girl's head, for instance, who sits, half in light and half in shadow, singing and twanging her guitar to the dancers, while her tear-laden eyes are turned to the poor young mother on her left; and the face of the mother herself, which, without any approach to over-accent, exactly expresses her desolation.

In the following year, 1865, Phillip sent to the Academy the large picture of *Murillo Painting in the Streets of Seville*, which was recently sold. Although, perhaps, his most



G. Wooliscroft Head sc.

1877

ambitious work, it is deficient as a creation. The subject was scarcely suited to his genius, which was at its best with themes that gave a chance for style, for balanced arrangement, and for simple arabesque. This may be seen in a picture painted in 1862-3, which, in spite of its comparatively small size and modest theme, is one of the very finest productions of the school to which its author belongs. The subject of *La Bomba* is merely a girl pouring out wine for two muleteers, but the arrangement of the three half figures, of their draperies and moving arms, is almost monumental; while in colour it displays to the full Phillip's peculiar faculty for winning a resonant chord from tints that most men have found, and left, too thin and poor. His management of pink is especially striking. A striped gauze of that colour is a favourite material with Spanish women, and in perhaps the majority of his pictures the painter of the *Wake* has introduced it with fine effect. Yellow, too, he employed with skill; but after pink his favourite tints were a rich green like the enamel on Spanish earthenware, black, and a brown that is occasionally a little too opaque. All these he used with extraordinary vigour in the *Murillo*, but with a certain want of balance which prevents the design from being entirely successful.

In the spring of 1866 Phillip went to Italy. It is said that his object in making the journey was not only to study the works of the great Italians, but also to paint the portraits of the Pope—and Garibaldi! If this were so he was disappointed, but he did not waste his time while awaiting his opportunity. Engaging the best female model he could find in Rome, he painted such a telling head of her that he sold it at once to an English visitor for a sum which defrayed the whole expense of his stay in Italy. Other results of this visit were *Pascuccia*, *The Officer*, and one or two more pictures of minor importance. But, of course, much of his time was given to the study of Titian, Tintoretto, and other masters in whose productions he was likely to take a special interest. Most, if not all, of these he had seen almost as well in Madrid, but there they had to contend with the more entirely sympathetic art of Velazquez. In Italy, on their own stage, they reigned alone, and so we feel no surprise to hear of Phillip perched for hours together before a Titian in the Pitti, looking into its substance to see how it was done. We may guess that if he had lived a few years longer the fruits of this expedition would have appeared in his work. Seeing what Spain did for him, we may even regret that he never made his way to the true East, where the air would have carried new life into his enfeebled frame, and where he would have found a blaze of light and colour with which he had wider powers to cope, perhaps, than any other painter of his time.

All through life Phillip's health was precarious. After every careless exposure to cold, or to rapid changes of temperature, he had a 'dread warning' that his lungs would not bear anything but the most careful use. One patriotic biographer insists that it was a yearly visit to his native country, to the rain-washed Highlands, that kept him going. But the fine air of Seville had no doubt much to do with the energy he developed in spite of his fragile constitution. A letter, which lies before me as I write, is dated from Seville, in March, 1857. It is written immediately after the crisis of an attack of pneumonia, caught by the sudden change from a hot ball-room to the cold outside; and in it he speaks of his health in such a way as to suggest the ever-present sense of a precarious hold on life. It was during this stay in Spain that Ansdell was his companion, and in the same letter he speaks of the Spaniards' astonishment at the amount of work put through by the latter. 'The worthy Sevillians,' he says, 'look upon him as one endowed with supernatural powers, they are unaccustomed to see men or mules work so hard as he has done since he came here.' And yet Phillip himself, not only worked as he must have worked to paint the pictures he did, but he also contrived to enjoy the humours of Spanish life, to share the excitements of the bull-ring, to loiter in fairs, to 'shake his leg' at a masquerade, and, in short, to get some notion of that popular life of the South from which his more matter-of-fact companion held aloof.

Phillip's character was delightful. Warm-hearted, generous to a fault, simple and single-minded, he could not make an enemy, while on his intellectual side he had a large share of that quiet humour which his countrymen seldom lack, but for which they still more rarely get the credit. In selling his pictures he was curiously diffident. Mr. Barlow, who acted for him during his absence in Spain, more than once asked and obtained on his behalf more than double the prices Phillip himself had placed upon the pictures he sent home. This same friend was Phillip's executor, and to him occurred the happy idea of having all the pictures found unfinished in the studio photographed, so that indisputable evidence should be extant of the condition in which Phillip had left them. Phillip's peculiar mode of work made these very numerous. When a scene or a subject struck him, he seized one of his dark grey canvases and set down as much as he wanted, to preserve the idea or the facts, putting off the completion to any convenient season. Fifty-six of these half-finished pictures were taken from his studio at his death. They were photographed by Mr. Barlow, who gave sets of the prints to the British Museum and the Royal Academy, and so supplied a check on the presumption of those who think that a picture is nothing if not finished.

When he set out for Italy, Phillip's health was even worse than usual, and not long after his return he was struck down with paralysis in the house of his friend, Mr. Frith, R.A. From this he never recovered. His death took place on the 27th February, 1867. For the moment Phillip's art is, in some degree, out of fashion. It is too simple, too direct, too blissfully content in its appeal to sense, to please those who like a picture to be a little mysterious. Phillip recognised the power in chords of colour and rhythms of line, and with them was content to stimulate the subtleties of sense. He had no wish to rival poetry or to invoke association. His frank enjoyment of the popular picturesque seemed to him a sufficient foundation for an *œuvre*. And so to a generation which falls down and worships Rossetti, and Burne Jones, and Watts, and Holman Hunt, his pictures seem a little unexciting. They have had the bad luck, too, of setting a fashion which has been followed mainly by men of mediocre talent. Phillip's imitators have been more faithful to their model than those, perhaps, of any other English painter; faithful, I mean, according to their lights, for in none have his splendid colour and his broad, simple brushing reappeared. To know what Phillip's permanent rank will be in English art, we must find an answer to the question: For how much do fine colour and technical ease count in the fame of a painter? In colour alone Phillip has been surpassed by some of his own English contemporaries. Nothing he did can be put quite on a level with the *Chant d'Amour* of Mr. Burne Jones, or even, perhaps, with the *Vanessa* of Sir John Millais. To these men some, no doubt, would add Rossetti, but I think they would be wrong. As I write these lines the masterpiece of Rossetti hangs at Manchester, not many yards from three pictures which may be taken as showing Phillip at his best, the *La Bomba*, the *La Gloria*, and a smaller picture, *El Cigarillo*, of which less has been said than it deserves. The colour in all these is infinitely more commonplace than in *The Beloved*, I might say than in any Rossetti. It attempts no complex harmonisation. There is no deliberate research into the byways of the palette. The most obvious tints are accepted as good enough for every purpose of the painter, and his effect is won by the instinct with which they are marshalled, and the skill which carries each to its fullest power. It is clear that vastly more thought has gone to the making of the Rossetti, that it carries some message for the mind far more complex than ever entered into the brain of Phillip; but still, in pictorial force and unity the palm lies with the latter. Perhaps an example will convey what I mean more clearly than argument. Well, it appears to me that a Phillip is to a Rossetti—the *La Bomba*, for instance, to the *Dante*—what a song by Burns is to a poem by such a man as Landor, 'The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman,' for example, to 'Regeneration.'

Phillip was superior to most English colourists, both as a draughtsman and as a

practical painter. His brush had a breadth and decision which has always been rare in this country. His facility was even too great. He began a picture straight away on the canvas, rarely making any preparation beforehand beyond the merest blocking out of masses on a sheet of note-paper. Of his more important works, however, he sometimes made painted sketches, but this was not enough to cure him of that readiness to put up with the second-best in arrangement which prevents not a few of his works from having their full effect.

None of Phillip's better pictures have yet found their way into our public collections.



SKETCH PORTRAIT OF SIR J. E. MILLAIS, BART., R.A., WHEN A BOY. BY J. PHILLIP.*

The National Gallery of Scotland, indeed, possesses an unfinished canvas on which his facility, his animation, and some hint at his power as a colourist, are to be read. The subject is *Spanish Boys playing at Bull-fighting*. Besides this the same collection includes several of his water-colour drawings and three portraits, as well as the copy from Velasquez already mentioned. The portrait sketch of Sir John Millais, here reproduced, was painted in 1843, when Millais was fourteen years old. It was used in *Wallace*, a picture exhibited by Phillip at the Academy of 1846. The picture called *Aqua Bendita* or *Holy Water*, which has been successfully etched by Mr. George Rhead, with the kind permission of Mr. James Orrock, was painted in 1857, and repeated four years later on a larger scale.

* I have to thank Mr. T. Oldham Barlow for permission to reproduce this interesting sketch.

In 1873, six years after Phillip's death, a comprehensive exhibition of his work was held at South Kensington. The number of pictures brought together was two hundred and twenty, and the catalogue compiled by Mr. Oldham Barlow will always remain a 'document' for the painter's biographers.

Among the pictures hung at this Exhibition was a portrait by Phillip of a fellow-townsmen, James Cassie, who painted *genre* pictures, portraits, and landscapes for most of his life at Aberdeen. He was born at Inverurie in 1819, but went early to the granite city, and there spent most of his days. His last years, however, were passed in Edinburgh, where he and his broad, reposeful sea-scapes were held in high favour. He died in 1879, a few months after his election to the full membership of the Scottish Academy. There is a good example of his work in the Edinburgh Gallery.

In the same collection hangs a picture of *Sunset over Solway Moss*, which, taking it altogether, is perhaps the best example of the old school of Scottish landscape in the gallery. Its author was William Simson, who was born at Dundee in 1800. Educated in the Trustees' Academy, under Andrew Wilson, he soon began to evince a gift for landscape, in which, had he persevered, he might have risen to fame. But in 1835 he paid a long visit to Italy, after which he gave his attention mainly to figure subjects. In these he was not so successful. Simson died in London in 1847.

Another painter of the same class was Edmund Thornton Crawford, who was born at Cowden, near Dalkeith, in 1806. As a boy he was apprenticed to a house-painter in Edinburgh. This engagement was soon put an end to, however, for the lad showed a bent towards fine art which was unmistakable. He entered the Trustees' Academy, and soon after he was twenty began to exhibit at the Royal Institution. In 1831 he contributed for the first time to the show of the Royal Scottish Academy, and two years later paid the first of several visits to Holland. For years he was content to paint on a very modest scale, but in 1848 he sent a landscape to the Exhibition which at once gave him a high place among the Edinburgh painters. He was elected an Associate of the Scottish Academy in 1839, a full Member in 1848, and died at Lasswade on the 29th September, 1885. During his stays in Holland Crawford made, perhaps, too close a study of the Dutch landscapists, and became, like so many of his compatriots, over-enamoured of tone. His pictures are, therefore, a little monotonous and wanting in that vitality which has since become a distinguishing mark of the school to which he belonged. His place is rather with Thomson of Duddingston and other members of the old persuasion than with his own contemporaries. Three of his pictures are in the Edinburgh Gallery. One of them, a group of trees, is marked by great freedom and breadth.

A year later than Crawford, Thomas Duncan was born at Kinclaven, Perthshire, on May 24th, 1807. At first intended for the law, he was placed by his parents in the office of a Writer to the Signet, with whom he remained until his twentieth year. His drudgery at deeds had not prevented him from keeping up a certain familiarity with the pencil; and when his time was out, he made for Edinburgh, where he entered the Trustees' Academy, then under Sir William Allan. While a boy at school he had painted scenery for the play of 'Rob Roy,' which was acted by himself and his school-fellows, and now that he was on the road to be a painter in earnest, he showed the facility that achievement would lead one to expect. Of his early pictures one of the best—*Anne Page and Slender*—and the reputation it brought him, led to his being elected an Associate of the newly founded Academy. He succeeded Sir William Allan as Master of the Trustees' Academy, and in 1843, after the exhibition of his pictures for three successive years in Trafalgar Square, he was chosen an Associate of the Royal Academy. Altogether he exhibited eight pictures with that body. Perhaps the best things he did are *Prince Charlie entering Edinburgh after the Battle of Preston Pans*, and *Prince Charlie Asleep and a Fugitive after Culloden*.

He had begun two important pictures—*Wishart administering the Sacrament before his Execution*, and *Queen Victoria at Taymouth*—when he was attacked by a disease which killed him on the 25th of May, 1845. His pictures show a considerable gift for colour, and it is probable that his premature death cut short a career which had not yet reached its zenith. In the South Kensington Museum there is a small picture by him—*The Waefu' Heart*, and in the Edinburgh Gallery, besides the *Anne Page* already mentioned, a sketchy little picture of *Jeannie Deans and the Robbers*, in which vigorous design is clothed in really fine colour.

Alexander Christie was born at Edinburgh in 1807, the same year as Duncan, and, also like him, served an apprenticeship in the office of a Writer to the Signet. In 1833 he gave up the law for art, and enrolled himself among the disciples of Sir William Allan. Afterwards he worked for a time in London, but returned to Edinburgh, and settled there. When Duncan died, in 1845, Christie was appointed director of one branch of the Trustees' Academy, and in his new capacity did much to influence the study of decorative art. He died on the 5th of May, 1860. In the Scottish National Gallery there is an *Incident in the Great Plague of London* by him. It is a very poor performance, and more interest attaches to a panel on which some figures of saints were painted from his design by Mr. T. Faed, when a pupil in the school.

Ten years later than the two last was born James Drummond, a native of Edinburgh, who devoted his life to the study and illustration of Scottish history and tradition. He first exhibited in 1835, and from that year onwards was a constant contributor to the annual exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy. His pictures have much of that brown, leathery quality which is to be found in too many productions of his School, and they are painted without finesse. On the other hand, they are careful as restorations, their drawing is good, and they are often full of bustle and vitality. Several of Drummond's most characteristic pictures are in the Edinburgh Gallery. Perhaps the most notable is the *Porteous Mob*. This tragedy, which might have been forgotten long ago but for the 'Heart of Midlothian,' took place on the night of September 7th, 1736. Many of its incidents had been handed down by history, letters, and traditions, and of these Drummond was a careful collector. On a canvas about five feet wide he has painted the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, as Porteous was being carried into it to the place of his lynching. The street is crowded with the two mobs, the determined men who supply the backbone to the whole proceeding and those who aid and abet them, on the one hand, and the frightened lieges who make the best of their way out of danger on the other. Seven more pictures by Drummond hang at Edinburgh, but they all suffer from poverty of colour and monotony of handling, like the *Porteous Mob*. Their author died, after a long illness, in 1877.

A contemporary of Drummond's, though a few years his senior, William Borthwick Johnstone, began life as a solicitor. He had not long followed the law, however, before he began to give signs that Nature had meant him for art. He accordingly quitted the high desk for the easel, and worked with such a will that, late as he began, he became an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1840, and a full Member in 1848. His time after that was given as much to the literature and history as to the practice of art, and when the Scottish National Gallery was established in 1858 he became its first Curator. During the latter years of his life he wrote much himself on art and artists. He died in 1868. In the gallery over which he presided, he is represented by a large *Death of Rizzio*. Though not without some good colour passages, its chief characteristic is vulgarity of type. Johnstone's own portrait, by Phillip, hangs on the same walls.

In a book like this, it would clearly be impossible to notice all the painters of the second rank who have helped to give Scotland a school. The last six names I have mentioned are those of men who fairly represent the rest of the rank and file. Some of them had more ability than the rest, but to none was there granted either that touch of

genius which raise men like Phillip, and Wilkie, and Raeburn, to a pinnacle in spite of drawbacks, or the fine tradition which makes good painters out of poor materials. Readers of these pages may have noticed that in almost every instance Scottish artists began life in some other trade or profession. Not only were they, as a rule, discouraged in boyhood—that, unfortunately, has been the lot of nearly all British painters down to those of our own generation—they were, in three cases out of four, compelled to seriously embrace some other calling, from which they only escaped at a period so late as to handicap them in the race for perfection. The weak draughtmanship of our English school has been noticed and abused often enough, but it has seldom or never been pointed out how greatly it is due to that national dislike to art as a calling which is only now dying out. This prejudice puts off the commencement of study to so late a period of youth that the scholar scampers through what ought to be the steadiest part of his training. At the present moment there are scores of clever painters and a few of genius, living, and working, and lamenting every day that the prejudice of a parent had wasted on some impossible trade the years in which they might have learnt to draw. In Scotland this took place still oftener than in England. There both prejudice and paternal authority were stronger, and so painter after painter entered ill equipped on his profession at an age when he should have had years of hard work behind him.

VIII.

*William Leighton Leitch; Sam Bough; George Manson;
George Paul Chalmers.*

BEFORE going on to discuss the latest development of Scottish art, I must pause for a moment to say something of four men, lately deceased, who belong more or less to the past.

William Leighton Leitch was born in Glasgow in 1804. His father, a manufacturer



TULLY VEOLAN. FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER W. L. LEITCH.

sent him first to a private school; secondly, to the school of the Highland Society; and thirdly, to the high stool of a lawyer's office. From the last post, he moved, on his own responsibility, to the workshop of a scene-painter and decorator, where he at least learnt the names of pigments, and picked up some knack with the brush. About 1824 he was engaged as scene-painter to the Theatre Royal, Glasgow; but came to London soon afterwards, and became the friend of Stanfield and David Roberts. Acting, no doubt, on their advice, he went to Italy for some years, returning about 1830, and settling in London. In 1832 he sent his first contribution to the Academy, but it was long before he attracted any public attention to his work. In 1862 he was elected successively an Associate and a full Member of the Institute of Painters in Water Colours; having previously been teacher of painting in that medium to the Queen and several of her children. In the course of his engagement by the Royal Family, Leitch produced a great number of drawings in which grace, facility, and agreeable colour, were combined. Many of these were commissions from the Queen, and are now in her possession; others were executed against time, as practical lessons.

Leitch also taught the Princess of Wales. In the list of his humbler disciples he numbered several of the well-known aquarellists of to-day; among them Mr. James Orrock, a fellow Scot, who, although in his work in colour he has deserted his old master for the example of David Cox, still bears witness to his early training by those strong, well-organized drawings in pencil, three of which are here reproduced. William Leitch was for many of his later years Vice-President of the Institute. He died at St. John's Wood on April 25th, 1883. Leitch's art was essentially one of balance, subordination, and thoroughness so far as it went, rather than one of any special originality of outlook. His sympathy with nature was shallow, but his skill in using her for his own needs was great. Seldom brilliant as a colourist, he had a sense of harmony, and few of his drawings lack the repose it gives.



EDINBURGH FROM CRAIGLEITH QUARRY. FROM A LITHOGRAPH AFTER W. L. LEITCH.

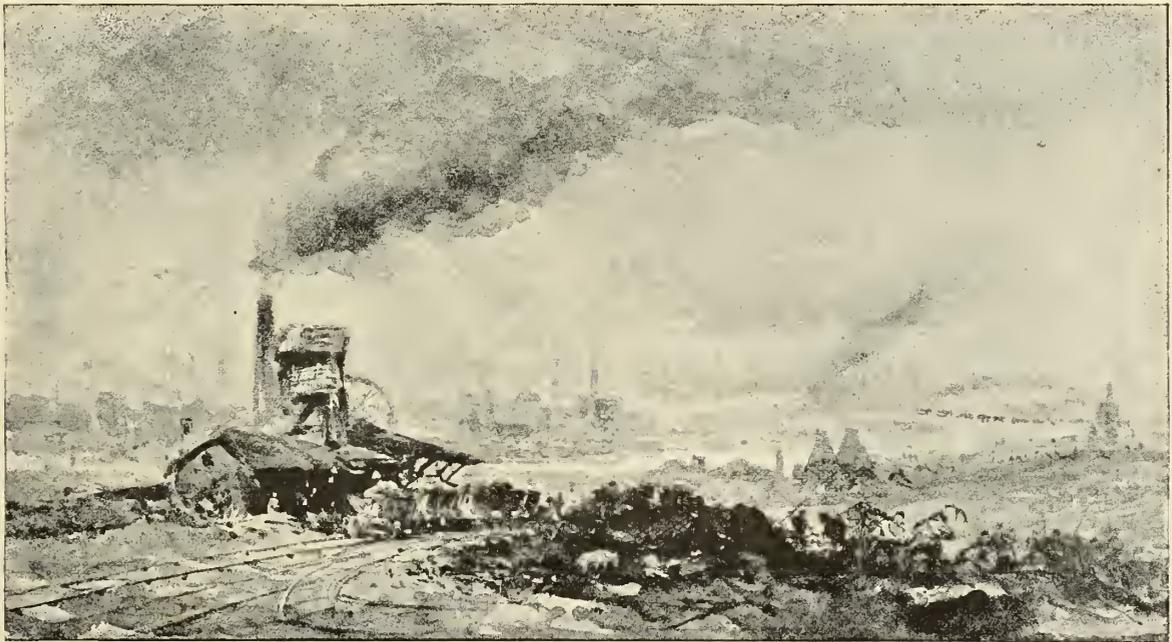
Sam Bough—the name has become so familiar that it would be affectation to lengthen it—was not a Scot, but I may be allowed, perhaps, to call him a Scottish painter. His life was mainly passed in the country of his mature choice; he was a Member of the Royal Scottish Academy for three-and-twenty years; he died in Scotland; and—a still more important consideration—his art has a *cachet* about it that is thoroughly northern. Bough was born at Carlisle in 1822. There he worked for two years in the office of the Town Clerk, after which he contrived to scramble into art. He never had any systematic teaching, and his first artistic efforts were in decorating interiors and in painting scenery. In 1855 he migrated to Edinburgh. A year later he became an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy, but had to wait nearly twenty years for promotion: it was not until 1875 that he was elected a full Member, an honour he enjoyed for three years. His death took place in Edinburgh, in November, 1878.

The most unexpected thing in Bough's art is its freedom from any taint of the amateur, of the self-taught man. As a colourist he had his defects. None of his pictures, either in oil or water, are fine in that respect, while not a few are positively bad. But in handling, in composition, and in drawing, he is invariably excellent. The landscape here reproduced



by permission of Mr. Barlow shows a grip on reality that is scarce even in these days, combined with an instinct for arrangement that is always one of the rarest endowments of the artist. In scenes like this Bough followed the tradition of Constable, and with finer colour and a larger manner would have come pretty close to the great Englishman. Mr. Barlow's picture is richer and warmer, no doubt, than most of Bough's, but otherwise it is a fair example of his powers as an oil-painter. The sketch *facsimiled* below has been lately added to the collection in the Print Room of the British Museum. It is about as good an example of impressionism, or rather as good an impression without the *ism*, as could readily be pointed to.

As a sketcher, Bough might even be called great. His eye for the essentials of a scene and his faculty for recording them, were alike rapid. With deeper sympathies he might have become one of the best of modern painters in his own *genre*. As a man, his character



LANDSCAPE BY S. BOUGH. FROM A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

was of a type not uncommon among those gifted with artistic facility. The responsibilities of life sat easily upon him. He was too absorbed in his art to be greatly alive to the more irksome conventions of society. He was, when in the humour, an excellent companion. A Scottish laird, whose home occupies one of the most delightful sites of the Border, told me, some years ago, a story which will illustrate this. Strolling down one summer morning to the river which rushed tumultuously by within a few hundred yards of his 'house-end,' he espied, on his own private ground and perched on a favourite boulder, an unkempt stranger with a sketching-block, who turned a deaf ear to his shouts to 'Come out of it!' Stepping near, the laird looked curiously over the intruder's shoulder. A glance at the work was introduction enough, for my friend, like so many of his race, had much unexpected culture. 'Ah!' he cried, 'you're Sam Bough!' A brusque nod was his answer, and another followed an apologetic excuse for the roughness of the summons, and an invitation to lunch at the house when the morning's work should be done. At three o'clock or thereabouts, however, Bough duly appeared, and the two sat down to lunch. They did not rise from the table until, at five o'clock the next morning, they sallied out for a saunter in the early sunlight. Talk and whiskey—I know the tale of tumblers, but I dare not tell—had filled the interval.

In Bough's pictures the earliest signs of what has now become a characteristic feature

of Scottish landscape appears. I mean, research into the scintillation of light. He was fond of painting under the sun, and of bringing his work together by the jewelled network of isolated light that is so obtained. His lights were too white, and the colour passages in which they occurred too often colourless. His pictures were consequently cold, but nevertheless they must be included among the shaping causes of the present originality of Scottish art.

Here, perhaps, would be the right place to notice the life and work of a painter whose very name is unknown in England, although his influence upon his countrymen has been considerable: I mean J. Milne Donald. On the whole, however, it will be more convenient to say what is to be said about him in my next chapter, and to confine myself now to the four names at the head of my page. George Manson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. After working for a time with a punch-cutter, making dies for type, he took to wood-engraving, in which he acquired much proficiency, taking Bewick for his model. When he



LINCOLN, FROM THE FIELDS. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. ORROCK.

was twenty-one he began practice as a professional painter, working chiefly in water. In the same year he paid a first visit to London, and two years later to the Continent. On his return to Edinburgh symptoms of lung disease manifested themselves; and early in 1874 he was ordered to the South. He went to Sark, and twelve months later to Paris where he began to etch. On his return to England he settled for a time at Shirley, near Croydon; but by then the last hope of better health had vanished, and, moving to Lymptone, in Devonshire, he died there in the first weeks of 1876. His life is the subject of a sympathetic monograph by Mr. J. M. Gray.

George Manson may in some respects be compared to Frederick Walker. His life was shorter, and his energies were still more oppressed by precarious health; but in his art, so far as it goes, there is the same tenderness of feeling, the same insight into colour quality, the same undeveloped sympathy with line, and the same modesty of conception. With ten years more of life and health, he might have left behind him an *œuvre* on which his name could rest as securely as that of Walker may repose on the idyllic pages with which he has enriched the art of England. An exhibition of water-colour pictures by George Manson was brought together at No. 133 New Bond Street in 1881, when they excited great interest among those to whom his work had been unknown during his life.

Another Scottish painter whose career was brought to a premature end was the far more famous George Paul Chalmers. Chalmers was born at Montrose in 1836; and again, in his case, it has to be confessed with regret that the most valuable years of youth were wasted on a trade. After serving an apprenticeship to a ship-chandler he migrated to Edinburgh, and became a pupil of Robert Scott Lauder in the Trustees' Academy. There he worked for some years without showing much promise; and even after he had embarked on his professional career it was long before his art threw off its early looseness. From the beginning, however, he had shown great sympathy with colour.

Art education in Edinburgh was then at the beginning of a notable period in its history. Shortly before Chalmers joined their Academy, the Board of Trustees had appointed Robert Scott Lauder as its master, and for several years he was a beneficent despot. Lauder was one of those teachers who, without attempting to mould their pupils



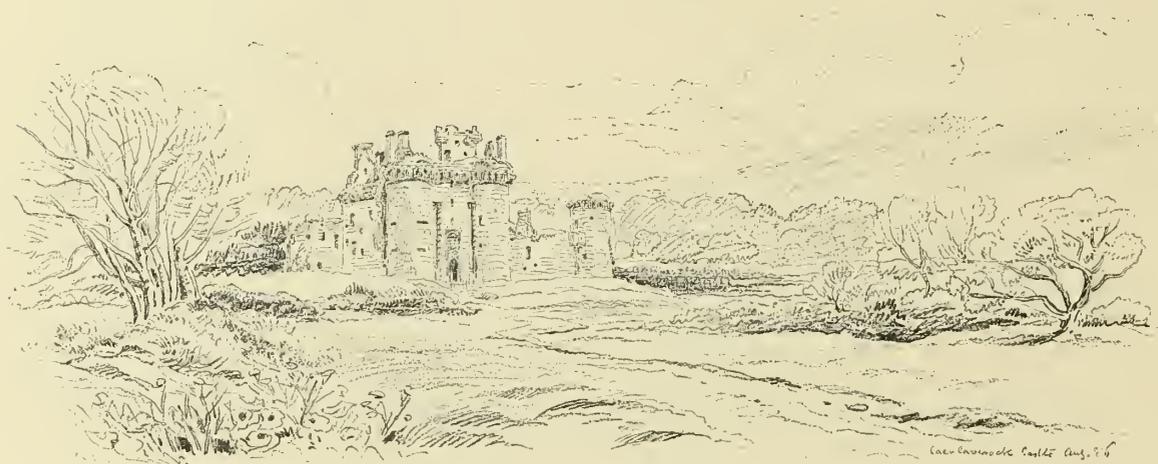
WARKWORTH CASTLE. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. ORROCK.

into any special form, have the knack of drawing out the best powers of each. It happened, then, that during the few years of his reign, the Trustees' Academy produced a number of painters who have since done great things—Chalmers, Orchardson, Pettie, Cameron, Graham, MacWhirter, MacTaggart, and a few more—whose bond of union lies chiefly in the fact that they are all colourists. 'It is hard sometimes,' says Mr. Alexander Gibson, the biographer of Chalmers, 'to know whether the success of the pupils is due to the teacher, or the repute of the teacher to his pupils; but in this instance, at least, the grateful remembrance of the scholars is enough to prove their master's influence. Over and above the mere practical result of his instruction, he seems to have excited among them a keen enthusiasm that resulted in unsparing work, and in the closest ties with each other, so that in spite of its slender equipment, there were few schools at that time where there was a more genuine devotion to art than at Edinburgh.' Lauder's own powers over colour make it pretty certain that his teaching had at least something to do with the success of his scholars as colourists.

It was in November, 1853, that Chalmers arrived in Edinburgh. He walked at once from the station to the Gallery, and was sent out into the strange city to buy himself tools.

He soon settled down, and found congenial spirits among his fellow-students. Mr. Pettie was one of his greatest friends, and tells how he used often to stay talking so late at Chalmers' lodgings that he had to stay all night. For three years hard work was continuous, and hard work with some fruit, for in his second year Chalmers won a fifth prize, and in his third a first. During these years he subsisted on what he earned by painting heads in oil or pastel, for which he would get prices varying from one to three, or, in exceptional cases, five guineas. About 1857 Chalmers returned to Montrose, and stayed there for two years in what Mr. Gibson calls an unexplained retreat. The beginning of his real career may be dated from his re-establishment in Edinburgh about 1859, for in 1860 he exhibited his first picture.

For years after this his livelihood was won from portraits, which, in strong contrast to his later habits, he finished with extreme rapidity. As for subject-pictures, those he appears to have painted with remarkable slowness from the very first. A *Monk at Prayer* hangs at present in the Edinburgh Gallery, of which it is told that Chalmers had paid as much to the model as he received for the picture. In 1862 he made an excursion into Brittany



CAERLAVEROCK CASTLE. FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. ORROCK.

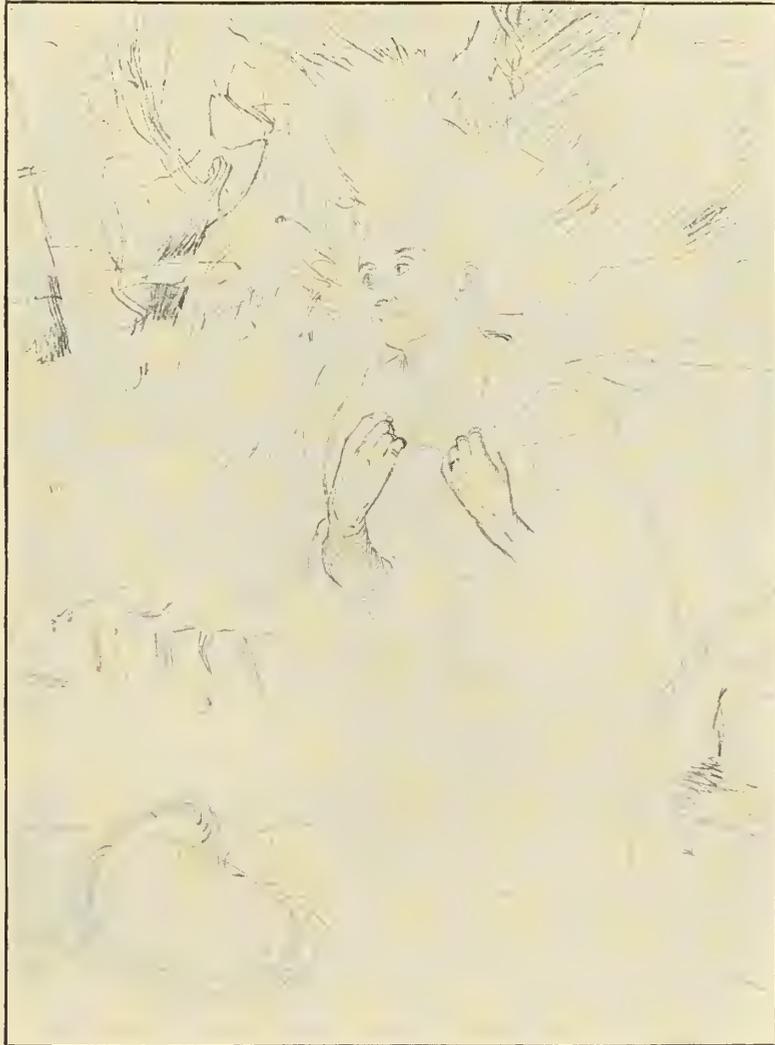
with Pettie and Tom Graham, and painted several pictures from the sketches he brought home. One of these—*The Favourite Air*—was bought by the Scottish Association for the Promotion of Art. In 1867 he was elected an A. R. S. A., and four years later an Academician. In that year he had sent to the Exhibition the small picture of *Prayer*, which was etched by M. Rajon for 'The Portfolio,' and reappears in these pages. This, we are told, gave him great pleasure, and was the first notice taken of him out of Scotland.

The last ten years of his life were cheered by success and by the appreciation felt for his gifts by every artistic nature that came in his way. He still painted very slowly. He still realised his conceptions with much pain, and often failed so completely to realise them at all, that abandoned pictures stood in stacks against his wall. The unfinished *Legend*, in the Edinburgh Gallery, cost him enormous trouble. It was altered again and again, so that after fifty or so years have passed over it, it may discover some strange surprises.

'The first impression that Chalmers made upon every one was that of a simple, affectionate, excitable nature, not knowing very much, very willing to believe and admire every thing of which he was ignorant, and capable of becoming very enthusiastic about the persons and things he really knew. That known circle was plainly very limited. All that was expressed by colour, either in art or nature, lay wholly within his sphere, and, indeed, whatever else could be perceived and enjoyed by a quick, delicate sense, although he cared for no beauty like the beauty of colour. So on the social side he had a sympathetic knowledge of character that often brought him to right conclusions for which he could give no reason, and he was extraordinary quick in detecting every passing shade of feeling.

These things seemed to be within his direct vision, and he therefore erred as rarely in tact and courtesy as in colour. But his horizon was limited by what he himself could see. The general course of the world was unknown to him. . . He knew little of literature, nothing of history, and was quite indifferent to politics. What views he might have had on these matters were mostly determined, after a womanly fashion, by the persons he lived with at the time. . . .

‘His excitement was always at its highest among pictures, especially when he saw them for the first time. It was curious to see him looking at a good picture, with his eager face and quick gesture, as he pointed rapidly to one passage after another that struck him, quite over-running, as a



FROM A STUDY BY THE LATE GEORGE MANSON.

rule, the mark of admiration, for whatever was good in a picture he perceived at once, and it was only after a time that he was able to judge it fairly as a whole. That faculty of admiration made him a somewhat dangerous adviser. He might be safely trusted if he said a picture was bad, but his praise was easily excited by some particular point, or even at the suggestion of something which he himself could have made fine. . . .

‘All the peculiar features of Chalmers’ character appeared distinctly in relation to his work. He was a ceaseless worker, kept to his studio all day long, and when away from it was never quite happy unless he had canvases with him. He rarely left home, even for a day or two, without bringing back something. . . . Partly this was habit, for he had been trained to steady work from the beginning, partly the pressure of the numerous tasks he had always on hand, but chiefly it seemed to spring from a continual inward necessity, which, if not satisfied, left him always restless and discontented. He could not keep away from his pictures, even when he himself knew that he was more likely to do them harm than good. They exercised a fascination over him, and he could not keep his fingers

off them if they were within reach. In the earlier times, before he had a separate studio, he took them up at all hours, even very late at night, often, of course, doing work that had to be undone in the morning, and if they were in sight he could not get them off his mind. A friend of his used to tell that dining with him one day, he could not get a word from him, Chalmers was quite abstracted, and seemed to be gazing earnestly into vacancy. At last his friend perceived that his eyes were directed somewhere behind him, and, turning round, he found that the picture that Chalmers was then in trouble about was standing against the wall full in sight. The remedy was obvious.*

Mr. Irvine Smith has a collection of fifteen or sixteen pictures by Chalmers in which his genius may be studied as a whole. They prove him, no doubt, to have been, above all things, a colourist. But, unlike some of his countrymen, he was not satisfied to concentrate himself on colour. Especially in his figure subjects do we seem to divine that it was in bringing design and modelling to sufficient completeness, that he found cause for his long hesitations. These give an occasional woolliness to his handling which finds no parallel in his landscapes, most of which look as though painted with great promptness and decision. Mr. Irvine Smith has a *Sligachan Burn in Spate*, in which the forms of rushing water and of highland landscape are rendered with perfect truth, so far as they go, and in splendid colour. The same qualities are to be found in two or three other pictures painted in Skye, and in great force in the study of a brook with overhanging trees, called *A Shady Pool*. The peculiarity of Chalmers as a colourist is his freedom from the extreme individuality shown by most of those who were his fellow-scholars. His work has little in it that is either decorative or arbitrary. He aimed at the full quality and complexity of nature. It is impossible to say, before his pictures, that he liked a red or a yellow, a silvery or a golden picture. He saw fine colour in anything set before him, and did his best to realise it. His pictures are low in tone, like those of most slow workers; now and then they are a little cold in the lights; and occasionally they show strange aberrations in design. But that their author had a fine eye, profound sympathies, and an enthusiastic devotion to his art, they never fail to prove.

The subject of *The Legend*, to which I have already alluded, is an 'auld wife' telling a ghost story to a semicircle of awe-struck children. It displays much of the loose, almost nerveless, handling which is too common in the early works of Chalmers, but its colour is delicious. Cool greys and deep, rich shadows, passages of silvery light and notes of glowing warmth, are reconciled upon the canvas with unerring skill; and, from the whole, the passion of the moment exhales like a scent. This picture, too, was etched by the same accomplished hand as *Prayer*, and published by the Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts, by whom the original has been deposited in the Edinburgh Gallery. Its author's mysterious death took place on the 28th of February, 1878. A few evenings before, he was at the dinner of the Scottish Academy. Thence he walked to the Artists' Club in Castle Street, where some conversation of a kind that would, and did, greatly move his excitable nature took place. Between one and two in the morning he left to walk home, and the next that was seen of him was his unconscious body, lying at the foot of some area steps at the corner of Rose Street and Charlotte Square. His head had been terribly wounded and his pockets rifled, but whether all this had been done by robbers and the painter afterwards thrown down the steps, or his watch and money taken by a thief who had found him there after a fall caused by his own lack of watchfulness, was never clearly determined. That it was no accident, however, seems to be the general belief of the painter's friends and of others who know the facts in detail. He was carried to the Infirmary, where his skull was found to be badly fractured, and on the last day of the month he died.

* 'George Paul Chalmers, R.S.A.' (Edinburgh, David Douglas), pp. 13, 15, 21. This biography was written partly by Mr. Alexander Gibson, partly by Mr. John Forbes White. It contains portrait etched by M. Rajon after a drawing by Mr. George Reid, R.S.A.



IX.

John Milne Donald; James Docharty; Alexander Fraser; W. M' Taggart; John MacWhirter; David Murray; Colin Hunter; Hamilton Macallum; Peter Graham.

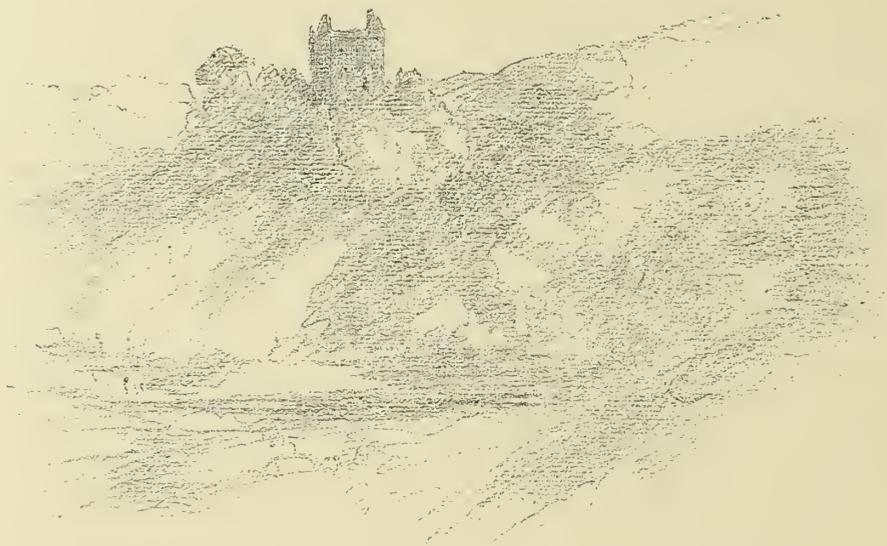
IT is never safe to attempt the establishment of too close a sequence in the growth of any phase of art, or to declare this man or that to have been its founder. It is, therefore, with much reserve that, before going on to speak of the Scottish landscape-painters now living, I refer to Horatio Macculloch and John Milne Donald as, in a fashion, the fathers of the school. In a previous chapter I ventured to speak of Macculloch's works in terms that were far from praise. His shortcomings as a colourist have always made them unattractive to me, and the accident, that upon them men of finer artistic constitution have built a truer art, does not seem to make up for their intrinsic faults. Not that Macculloch's colour was always bad. Now and then he painted a picture in which it was nearly good, and some of these appear to have been the models on which Donald formed himself.

John Milne Donald was a Highlander. He was born at Nairn in 1819, so that he was the junior of Macculloch by fourteen years. His father and mother moved to Glasgow shortly after his birth, and there the boy was educated and taught the beginnings of art. About 1840 he paid a short visit to Paris, after which he settled for a time in London. Here he made the acquaintance of Samuel Rogers, who encouraged him and gave him commissions for two pictures. His stay in London came to an end in 1844, when he established himself in Glasgow. There he died in his forty-seventh year, in 1866. Donald chiefly painted scenes in which the boldness of the Scottish Highlands is combined with the softer beauties of the Lowlands. Many of his pictures consist of tracts of broken ground, with patches of culture and scattered flocks of sheep, and in the distance rugged slopes and mountain sides. His colour, though seldom brilliant, was nearly always delicate and luminous, being in that the reverse of Macculloch's. His landscapes are mostly well composed, though often showing signs of haste. This fault sprang, no doubt, from the want of appreciation their author met with during his lifetime. He sold his pictures for very small prices, and, like many of his less-gifted comrades, was glad to eke out his income by painting panels for the ships built on the Clyde. Many of these were landscapes on glass, and not a few have since been transferred to canvas from the surface on which they were painted, and sold for considerable sums. For Donald was a born painter, and had he lived a generation later might have done much. In character he was reserved, even diffident, and so failed to make the most of such acceptance as he won. So far as I can discover, no picture of his hangs in any public gallery; they exist mostly in small private collections in Glasgow and its neighbourhood.

The immediate influence of Donald is to be traced in the work of, among others, James Docharty, who died at Glasgow, still young, in 1878. The son of a calico-printer, he was born at Bridgeton, Glasgow, in 1829. He began life as a designer, and to perfect himself in that calling studied for a time in France, where he contrived also to find leisure for painting from nature. When he was over thirty he abandoned industrial for fine art, and was elected an Associate of the Scottish Academy in 1877. He enjoyed his honours

but a few months. Docharty's best works are distinguished by the quiet harmony of their colour, and by a sympathy with nature which is not to be mistaken. They often fail as compositions, as he had no unerring sense of what to leave out. His pictures, like Donald's, are entirely in private hands.

Still pursuing the same thread of development we come to such living artists as Alexander Fraser, Alexander Vallance, William M'Taggart, John MacWhirter, and David Murray. Between these men the differences are, of course, very great; and to some it may seem that two at least among them should not be put in the list. But they have a bond of union in their desire to seek out and record the more subtle tints of landscape. Macculloch was a conventional colourist; Donald tried frankness in colour, but combined it with much of the old systematic picture-making. His successors were franker still, and set colour-truth in the forefront. Mr. Alexander Fraser, in his best work, has more affinity with Mr. Hook than with any one else. His colour is apt to be a little hot and red, but his brush is facile, and his pictures have much depth and solidity. Mr. Vallance, an old



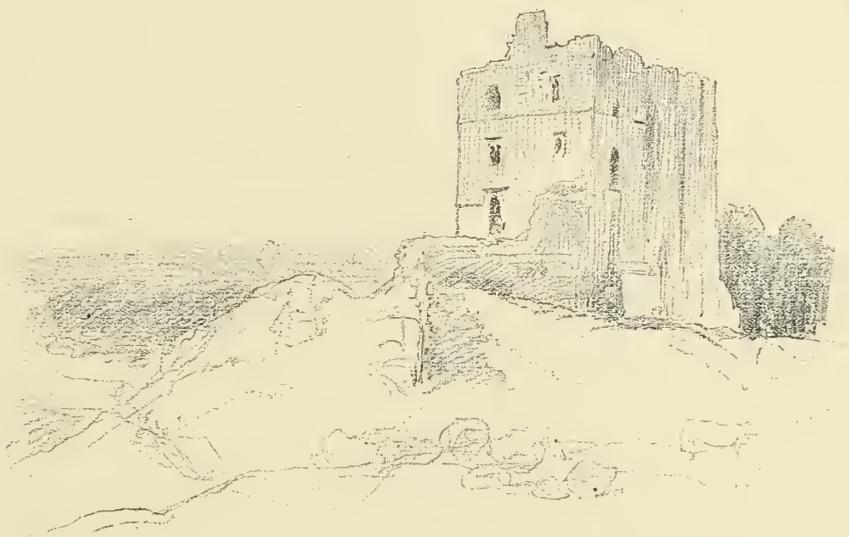
NEWARK, ON THE YARROW : FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. MACWHIRTER.

fellow-student of Pettie, Orchardson, and Chalmers under Robert Scott Lauder, is more eclectic in his art, but he shows the same general preoccupation. He began with figure pictures, which he has followed up with landscapes and seascapes. In 1875 he was elected an Associate, and in 1881 a full Member, of the Scottish Academy. Mr. William M'Taggart, who is perhaps bolder in his dealings with colour than any other living Scot who has resisted the charms of the highroad to England, is a native of Campbeltown. He entered the 'Trustees' Academy in 1852, and only seven years later was elected an A.R.S.A., to be promoted to full membership in 1870. His pictures have too often been over-slight in subject, and of late years he has outdone the impressionists in the looseness of his handling; but his colour is always fine, and his work as a whole full of movement and vitality.

The fullest development of the notions upon art embodied in the work of all these men is to be found, perhaps, in the pictures of Mr. MacWhirter. Often weak in design, never robust in constitution, they breathe a sympathy with the subtlest forms and tenderest tints of nature which is scarcely to be seen elsewhere. Judging from his pictures, Mr. MacWhirter's feelings are most readily enlisted by all that has to do with trees. His birches are famous, but perhaps his knowledge and insight are shown most thoroughly when he paints a various wood, a wood of birch and pine, or a forest in which those sharply contrasting allies share the soil with trees of less marked character. One of the distinctive features of the school to which he belongs is to paint in as high a key as possible; and

this Mr. MacWhirter carries farther, perhaps, than any one else. His range of tones is from pure silvery whites to shadows that are no more than greys. Such a contracted scale compels an infinite modulation, and demands a peculiar refinement of eye in the man that makes use of it. That Mr. MacWhirter has such an eye is his title to fame. He, too, was among the pupils of Robert Scott Lauder. Born at Inglis Green, near Edinburgh, in 1839, he went through the course at the Trustees' Academy, and migrated southwards in 1869. Ten years later he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy. Of all his pictures *The Lady of the Woods* and *The Three Graces* have, no doubt, been the most popular. In the first a single birch raises its graceful head in the clearing of a wood; the second was painted from three exquisite trees which stand about half a mile from the head of Loch Katrine, and are now pointed out to every tourist as 'The Three Graces of the Trossachs.' The pencil-sketches here reproduced are very slight, but they are enough to hint at their author's refinement of taste.

The strongest characteristic of Mr. David Murray's art is the freshness of eye it

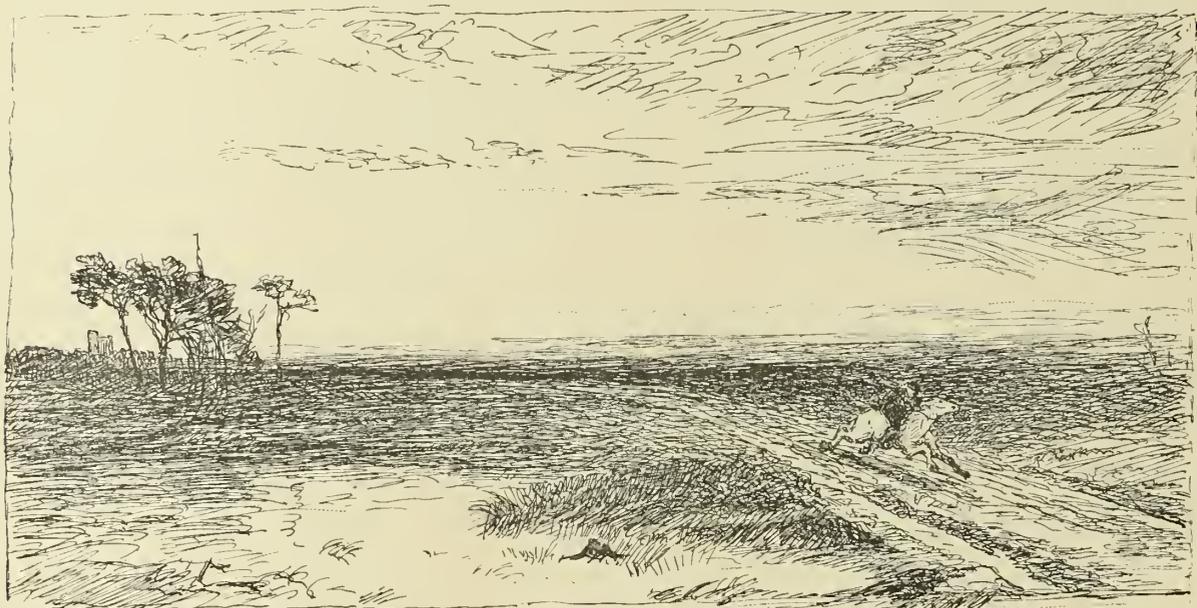


NORHAM CASTLE : FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY J. MACWHIRTER.

betrays. Like the rest of his countrymen, his preoccupation is almost entirely with colour. He has a good instinct for composition, and many of his pictures are excellent in their linear organization. Of this I may name a *Loch Linnhe*, which was at the Academy two seasons ago, as an example. His drawing, too, especially of trees, is good so far as it goes. It is, however, with the hues of things that his heart is engaged, and I doubt whether the real appearance of a spring landscape has ever been much better suggested than in some of his later works. A few months ago a series of pictures from the peat-fields of the Somme was exhibited at the rooms of the Fine Art Society. In some the drawing was perfunctory, in others there was insufficient relief and depth, but in nearly all a peculiar frankness of colour and a fine sense of atmosphere combined to produce something like illusion. Mr. Murray has a curious skill in the use of blue. In one of these Picardy landscapes he stretched a sky of unbroken blue over a flooded *marais* in which its colour was repeated. There was nothing to divide the two but a low line of distant hill, and, in the foreground, a waving breadth of dying and yellow reeds. But the whole shimmered in warmth and sunlight, reminding us of an English painter, Mr. Henry Moore, whose blue seascapes have much in common with Mr. Murray's work. David Murray was born in Glasgow in 1849, and lived there until a few years ago. His family belongs to Appin, Argyleshire, and in his youth he did not escape the struggle which nearly every artistic Scot has had to pull through before getting fairly on

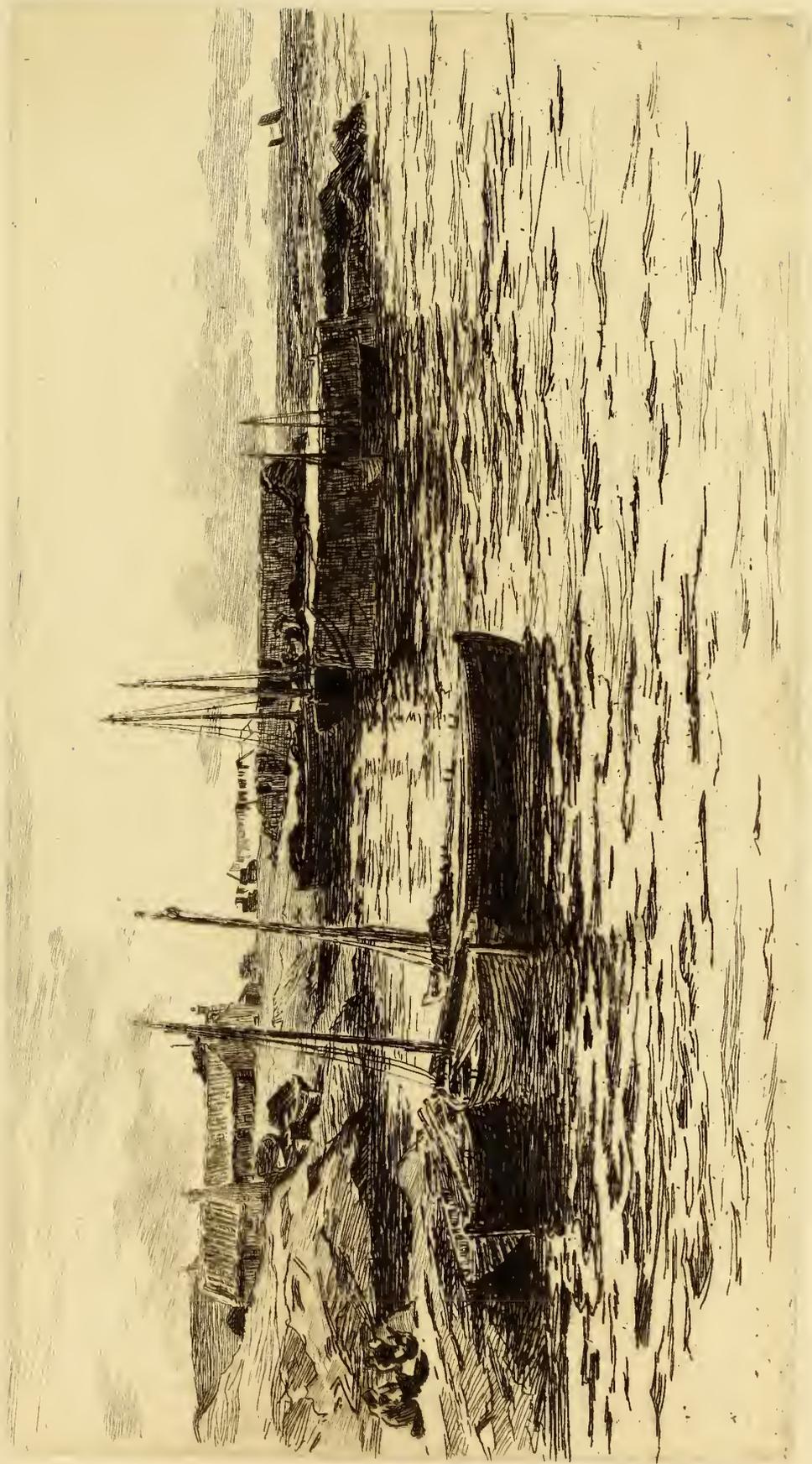
the road for which Nature meant him. For ten or eleven years he was in the office of a Glasgow merchant. During all that time he worked at art in the early morning and late evening, and at last acquired sufficient confidence in his powers to face the opposition of his friends, to throw up commerce, and to embark in the boat which has hitherto carried him bravely.

What I have just said of David Murray applies to so many of those with whom these papers are concerned that the phrases might be stereotyped. Wilkie is almost the only important exception to the long list of Scottish painters who have had to pass through the purgatory of trade to the paradise of art. Now and then the probation is varied by the lawyer's stool, but the selling of law is to an artistic soul a still more barren source of satisfaction than the selling of things to eat or wear. It was from a lawyer's office that art enticed Mr. Colin Hunter. Born in Glasgow in 1841, he was taken, when still a child, to Helensburgh, where his father was Postmaster. There he made his first acquaintance



OVER THE BORDER. FROM A PEN SKETCH BY J. MACWHIRTER.

with the sea and his first attempt to paint. In the latter he was encouraged, and to some extent helped, by Milne Donald, with whom he used to go on long sketching excursions in the country between Glasgow and the mountains. Like most men of original ability, Donald was not much of a teacher, but a youth with brains could not frequent his company without picking up hints enough to help him past the rudiments. At first Mr. Hunter painted elaborately careful studies of rural lanes, corners of fields, fag-ends of moors, and so on. These were afterwards varied by portraits—portraits of men, portraits of horses, portraits of houses—anything, in short, that would enable him to cling to the profession he had chosen until practice should bring skill, and with skill power to pick and choose. When about five-and-twenty years of age he spent a few months at Paris in the studio of M. Bonnat, a curious supplement to his desultory training under Donald. It was a few years afterwards, in 1868, that he made his first appearance at the Royal Academy. The picture he sent was called *Taking in the Nets*, and from that year his devotion to things of the sea, or at least of the sea-board, has been almost unbroken. From very early years he had been accustomed to cruise about the mouth of the Clyde in small boats, so there was nothing surprising in his choice of a theme. The sea is a difficult sitter. In a landscape the aspect of one day is lost the next, but on the ocean the colour-changes from hour to hour are always great. By one who wishes to make them the base of his art



infinite patience, infinite observation, and a memory that is infinite too, are required. No subject leaves the door so wide open to mannerism, and, until our own time, nearly all those who had painted the sea had taken refuge in conventionality. Even Turner had epitomised it. What he tried to do was exactly what the contemned Dutchmen had attempted a century and a half before. Between him and them the difference was one of degree. The principles underlying the *Calais Pier*, the *Shipwreck*, the *Spithead*, were identical with those on which the vituperated, and, I allow, the vituperation-deserving, Backhuysen, had acted as he sat in his famous boat off the long rampart of Holland. Those principles were imitative. Their aim was to make something which should look like the sea as a whole, to conventionalise without allowing the conventions to appear; to reduce the ocean, in fact, into something manageable, and to imitate that. In the pictures of Mr. Hunter, and of those upon whom his example has not been lost, no attempt of the sort is made. Certain aspects of the sea which are within the grasp of paint are selected and rendered with all possible vigour, the rest being frankly left out. Mr. Hunter does not attempt to transfer the waves to his canvas. He understands that paint can grapple with the sea as colour, and as colour he is content to take it. The result is, that although he does not touch all those chords in us which sympathise with the sea, he moves one of them to a deeper vibration than it can receive from an art more diffuse.

To Mr. Hunter success came at last with fair rapidity. In 1866 he exhibited his first picture in London with the Society of British Artists. In 1868, as I have already noted, he appeared for the first time at the Academy. In 1872, when he sent *Herring Trawlers* and *Sailing Free*, he was already well known. A year later his *Trawlers Waiting for Darkness* attracted much notice, and has since become widely known through the etching of M. Chauvel.

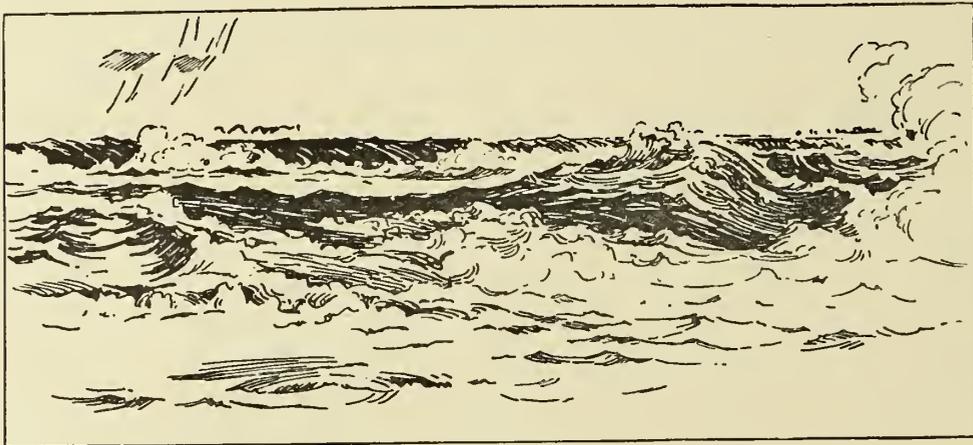
In 1879 Mr. Hunter exhibited *Their only Harvest*, which was bought for the Chantrey Fund Collection. A little later he produced *Mussel Gatherers*, which now hangs with the rest of Mr. G. C. Schwabe's magnificent gift in the Gallery of Hamburg. Since then his best things have been *Lobster Fishers*, of which a rapid sketch by himself appears on page 79. *Waiting for the Homeward Bound*, tugs lying out at Ailsa Craig to take ships into the Clyde, now in the gallery at Adelaide; *The Herring Market at Sea*, lately in the Manchester Gallery; and *The Upper Rapids at Niagara*, of which also we reproduce a sketch. In the autumn of 1884 Mr. Hunter made a pilgrimage to America to paint the last-named picture. When it was seen at the Academy of the following year, it made a strong impression upon all those to whom a vigorous originality is not a cause of offence.

Mr. Hunter is not only a painter; he is also among the best of modern etchers. His etchings have mostly the disadvantage of being interpretative, but, on the other hand, being after his own work, they are treated with much of the freedom of the *peintre-graveur*. Just as his work in colour is strong by selection from nature, so his etchings are strong by selection from his work in colour. It must, however, be confessed that they do not, as a rule, show much sympathy with that very subtle quantity, the 'etched line.' In this respect the best etching he ever did, no doubt, is the *Lobster Fishers*; on the other hand, that falls short, in the important matter of colour, of the brilliant little plate from *A Banffshire Harbour*, which is given here. In this plate, and in many others of his etchings, Mr. Hunter gives proof, too, that, although he can scarcely be called a trained draughtsman, he has a strong instinct for form. The figures introduced into his pictures are roughly built, but they are right so far as they go, while his boats are always buoyant and beautifully drawn.

Superficially, there is much in common between the art of Colin Hunter and that of Hamilton Macallum. But there is one great difference. The former gives his attention mainly to colour; he sacrifices other things to colour; while the latter gives the first place to atmosphere. Of course every painter looks first to colour, in one sense. It is his

material; and atmosphere, aerial perspective, even form, depend upon it. But nevertheless there is no difficulty in seeing when colour for its own sake is not the preoccupation, or at least the *forte*, of an artist. In colour Mr. Macallum's work is sometimes false. It has a metallic resonance of which I, for one, can find no echo in nature. And this I believe to come from a colour instinct in which there are flaws. As studies of light and air, however, I confess that to me the best works of Macallum seem to deserve a very high place. In some of his pictures the sun palpitates through the vaporous air with a truth not surpassed by Cuyp. In presence of this great beauty much rudimentary composition and much weak drawing may be forgiven. Mr. Macallum was born at Kyles of Bute, in 1843. When he was twenty-two years of age he entered as a student of the Royal Academy, but his art has been won without much assistance either from individuals or schools. His system has for years been to work in the full daylight, either in the open air, or in the glass-house which he has built for himself at Hampstead. Mr. Macallum's body colour drawings have a curiously brilliant effect.

Another painter from the neighbourhood of Glasgow, who has something in common



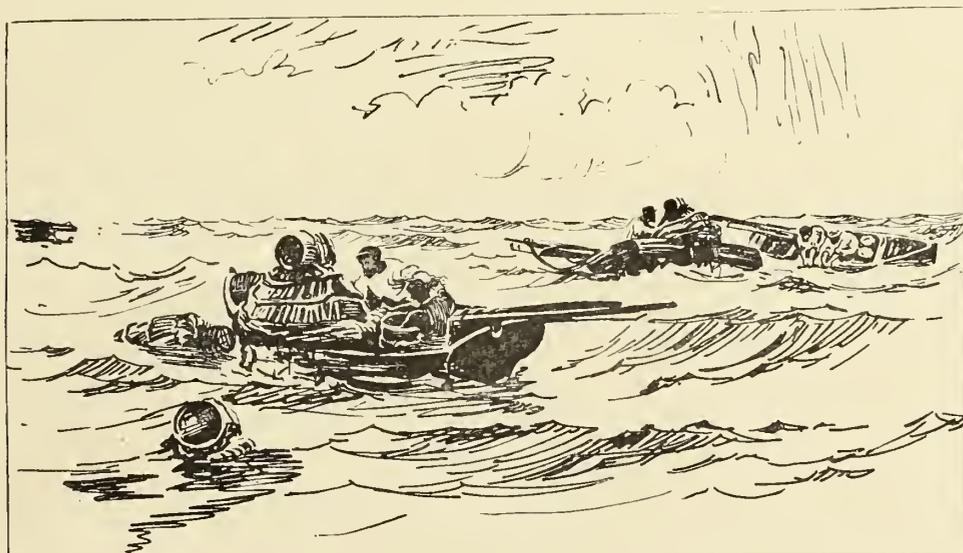
THE UPPER RAPIDS, NIAGARA; FROM A PEN AND INK DRAWING BY COLIN HUNTER.

with all these men, is Mr. Joseph Henderson. Born at Stanley, in Perthshire, in 1832, he was educated at Edinburgh in the Trustees' Academy. In 1852 he moved to Glasgow, where he has lived and painted ever since. For a long time he was almost entirely occupied with portraits and figures, but about fifteen years ago he began to paint subjects from the sea-coast, and with those he has made his mark. His work is characterised by cool, silvery colour, and by careful technique.

One of the best landscapes of the last thirty years is *The Spate in the Highlands*, the picture with which Mr. Peter Graham leapt into fame. Unlike too many works of the school to which it belongs, it is carefully considered and successfully balanced. The mountains which enclose the narrow valley, which in turn confines the swollen river, have a coherent rhythm of line which is helped by the shapes of the drifting clouds and by the tortuous course of the stream itself. The colour is rich and deep, the painting solid and masterly. Had Mr. Graham always painted like this he would have held a commanding position in our modern school. His name would have been coupled with Mr. Hook's in answer to those who lament that landscape proper, as distinct from seascape, has now fallen upon evil days. Unfortunately it is long since he has painted such a picture as *The Spate*. His later works, whether of sea or land, have had in them much to admire, but they have been comparatively cold in colour, comparatively thoughtless in conception, and without the depth and fatness of that fine creation. But even in *The Spate* Mr. Graham was not original; that is, he did not betray much personality in his view of nature or in his feeling for

art. All he did was to paint on the old lines with refreshing vigour and with a happy result. In all but what is known as quality, *The Spate* might be a Macculloch. In quality it is immeasurably beyond anything that artist ever did, but it is built on his system, and, as far as theories go, belongs entirely to his school.

Among the men of a younger generation, I must be content to name one or two of those with whom the traditions of Scottish landscape are safest. Mr. T. Austen Brown, so far as I know his work, paints in water-colour with not a little of the tenderness of Fred Walker. He is a colourist, and pays little attention to line. Mr. Thomas Scott, on the other hand, is stronger as an organizer of forms than as a symphonist in tint. His drawings—for he, too, works almost entirely in water-colour—are well composed, and full of unity and concentration. In colour they are in tune, but a little cold. Mr. Scott's subjects come from the classic ground about Ettrick Forest. He is a native of Selkirk, where he was born in 1854. He began to exhibit—with the Scottish Academy—in 1877,



LOBSTER FISHERS: FROM A PEN AND INK DRAWING BY COLIN HUNTER.

the first year in which he could give all his time to art. Since then he has made good progress, and his future is full of promise.

In tracing what seems to me the chief modern development of Scottish landscape, I have had to omit not a few names which should find a place in a more extended notice, such as those, for example, of William D. McKay and John Smart. But the painters I have found space for are representative men, who would have attracted notice in any country and at any time, and whose appearance together in a district so small as that formed by a few Scottish counties is a curious phenomenon. It is difficult, even after the experience of three centuries, to say confidently what the full effect of education is upon art. Such evidence as we have seems certainly to show that a training which is at once easily obtained and very severe, like that of the *École des Beaux Arts*, crushes original genius and deprives a country of those great artists who should stand above the ruck like steeples above a town. On the other hand, it creates an enormous class of painters who are thorough workmen, who say what they have to say in such a fashion that fault is only to be found with the tale they tell. Whether the Scottish artists named in the present paper would have lost or gained by earlier and more systematic teaching it would be hard to decide. To me, however, it certainly appears that they would have gained. To most of them a sufficient training in the use of line would have brought a fuller sense of its power, and, if not carried too far, would not have blunted their sense of colour. Over-insistence

on drawing destroyed colour in France, because it was accompanied by deliberate disparagement of the colourists. Young Frenchmen were taught, as a gospel, that there was something essentially noble in line and mean in colour. Untiring pains were taken to divorce the two beauties in their minds, and there to crystallise the notion that the one was incompatible with the other. That such teaching had results which, even yet, with the more rational ideas which govern the present generation, is not extinct, who can wonder?

X.

Sir Noel Paton; Erskine Nicol; Thomas Faed; Sir William Fettes Douglas; George Reid; John Pettie; William Quiller Orchardson; Robert Walker Macbeth; John Reid.

THIS final chapter will be devoted to the figure-painters yet living. These are pretty sharply divided into two classes by the dates of their births. Those born before 1830 belong to the narrative school, the school in which some antiquarian note, some dramatic story, or some domestic affection, stands for more than art. Those born later are, almost without exception, colourists, men whose real theme is colour, who frankly treat their subjects merely as pegs to hang colour upon. Among the former a large place in the public eye has long been filled by the three men whose names stand first in the above list. Sir Noel Paton, the Queen's Limner for Scotland, has won a curious reputation among those to whom art as art is incomprehensible. Though a good draughtsman, with much perception of beauty and a prolific fancy, as we can tell from such things as his drawings for Professor Aytoun's 'Lays,' and even from the two fairy pictures in the Edinburgh Gallery, his sympathy with the expressive power of line and colour is, to say the least, deficient. Sir Joseph Noel Paton was born at Dunfermline in 1821. In 1843 he became a student in the Royal Academy, and shortly afterwards attracted attention as an etcher of subjects from Shakespeare and Shelley. In 1845 he gained a prize at the Westminster Hall competition for his *Spirit of Religion*, and two years later won the premium of 300*l.* for two oil pictures, *Christ Bearing His Cross* and the *Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*. In 1849 he painted the *Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, which, with his *Reconciliation*, was bought for the Scottish Gallery. In 1855 Sir Noel Paton was honourably mentioned at Paris, and the same year exhibited the *Pursuit of Pleasure* at home. Several of his works have been published by the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland and by the London Art Union. He has also published two volumes of poems, and in 1876 was honoured with the degree of LL.D. by the University of Edinburgh.

Mr. Thomas Faed was born at Burley Mill, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, in 1826. He first studied art in Edinburgh, where he was very successful in the prize competitions. In 1852 he migrated to London, and three years later attracted much attention at the Academy with his *Mitherless Bairn*, now in the Melbourne Gallery. In 1861 he was elected an Associate, and in 1864 an R.A., while he also holds the Honorary Membership of the Vienna Academy.

His brother John is six years his senior. Born at Burley Mill in 1820, he went to Edinburgh in 1841, after having already trained himself to a certain point in art. In 1847 he became an Associate, and in 1851 a full Member, of the Scottish Academy.

Mr. Erskine Nicol is a native of Leith, where he was born in 1825. Apprenticed to a house-decorator, he contrived, during his spare time, to learn much at the Trustees' Academy, which he entered at the age of thirteen. While still an apprentice he gained the appointment of drawing-master in the High School, Leith. He afterwards spent three years in Ireland, where he gathered subjects for many of his best-known pictures. In 1855 he became an Associate, and in 1859 a Member, of the Scottish Academy; in 1867 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy.

The three painters just named combine much proficiency as draughtsmen, and no little faculty for humour and pathetic expression, with inability to conceive or create a picture. Their work is always spotty in colour, and scattered in design; in short, without pictorial motive. It has no *enveloppe*, none of that inner peace which atmosphere gives in nature, which value and harmony should imitate in art.

Very different is the work of such a man as the present head of the Scottish Academy. In his case art is too scholarly, too independent of daily sympathies. In his later pictures we are even oppressed by the care that has been used to keep each pictorial quality in due subordination to the main purpose, which is often the embodiment of some antiquarian fancy, or the reproduction of some quaint object from the painter's own collections. Sir William Fettes Douglas is the son of Mr. J. Douglas, banker, of Edinburgh, where he was born in 1822. His mother was a grandniece of Sir William Fettes, Bart., the well-known founder of Fettes College. Sir William was educated at Edinburgh University, and received a desultory training in art in the same city. He exhibited for the first time in 1843, and soon began to give evidence of the antiquarian bent of his mind. In 1851 he was elected an Associate, and in 1854 a Member, of the Royal Scottish Academy. In 1877 he was appointed Chief Curator of the Scottish National Gallery, but resigned that post on his election to fill the place left vacant by the death of Sir Daniel Macnee.

Three pictures by Sir William Douglas hang in the Edinburgh Gallery. The earliest is *The Messenger of Evil Tidings*. In spite of some fair colour it is not a characteristic example. The motive is at once melodramatic and trivial when worked out, and the picture is ill-composed. Far better are *The Spell*, given by Mr. Gibson Craig, and a small portrait of the late Dr. Laing, among his books and antiques, given by the painter himself. In the portrait the aesthetic question is complicated by the bringing in of so many properties;—a table on which a silver testimonial stands among parchments and old vellum-bound tomes, and a wall with etchings peering round the frames of oil pictures, make too nondescript a background for unity. In *The Spell* accessories could be selected as well as the scene, with the result that balance could be won. And it is. There is too much grey stone wall, and the picture has a false effect through the contradiction between the apparent daylight which fills the chamber, and the moonlit coast which appears through the window. But it is well composed; the colour is in tune, though the notes are not rich in quality; and the chiaroscuro is broad and simple. Technically, Sir William's great fault is a coldness arising mainly from a peculiar use of black. This reappears in his water colours, to which it gives a sootiness of tint, which is slight but distressing. One of the best of the Scottish President's pictures, especially in colour, hangs at South Kensington, but so high up that it cannot be examined comfortably. It was painted in 1855. The subject is a chemist's laboratory with two men examining some concoction in a large retort. *The Bibliomaniac*, which used to hang in the National Gallery, is not so good. It has been permanently lent to the city of Glasgow.

In this same Glasgow Gallery there hangs a full-length portrait of a Provost in his robes, which may be named as one of the cleverest works of the Aberdonian, Mr. George Reid, who has been faithful to his native city almost since the day of his birth. Much of his education as an artist was obtained in Holland, where he worked in the studio of Gerard Alexander Mollinger, a painter who won an early popularity in Scotland. In 1870 Mr. Reid was elected an Associate, and in 1877 a Member, of the Royal Scottish Academy. His diploma picture is the *Dornoch*, of which he has made a washed drawing for reproduction in these pages. It is a landscape entirely in the modern Dutch taste; grey in colour, elaborate in gradation, and solemn in sentiment. With a little more warmth and inner light, it would be one of the best things in the collection. But here I have hit upon Mr. Reid's weak point. His pictures are apt to



be just a little dry and cold. In the portrait of a Provost already mentioned, a crimson robe is relieved against a background of almost brick-dust red. Such a contrast would be excellent if both colours had exactly the right shade and the right quality, but Mr. Reid's crimson is a little too blue, and his background a little too yellow and opaque. The result is that he just misses a rich chord; otherwise this picture is first-rate. The pose is good; the drawing and modelling vigorous, and the brushing broad and coherent. Of all living Scotchmen, Mr. Reid, perhaps, most completely deserves to be called a master in the Continental sense. There is no faltering, no groping in what he does. So far as his pictures fall short of the highest standard, they do so because his gifts are not of the highest. With a deeper colour sympathy and a more fertile invention, he would have taken a commanding place among modern artists.

In the same category as Mr. Reid, I may, perhaps, name Mr. Robert Herdman, although the likeness between them is not very great. Mr. Herdman is represented at Edinburgh by a figure study, in which there is some good broad painting, and by *After the Battle*, a scene in a Highland cottage after some fatal scrimmage. Another name that here suggests itself is that of Mr. W. E. Lockhart, who has lately been commissioned by the Queen to paint the Jubilee Service in Westminster Abbey. Mr. Lockhart's water-colour drawings are better than his oil pictures. In them he contrives to get a finer harmony than seems to be within his reach in the nobler medium. For some years he has been an Associate of the Royal Water-colour Society, and many of the drawings he has sent to their shows have been notable for the clever use of sombre tones—blacks and reds. Of all his pictures, the best-known is that of the *Cid and the Five Moorish Kings*, the sketch for which hangs in the Edinburgh Gallery. Brilliant, though ill harmonised in colour, it fails dramatically through the amazing weakness of Mr. Lockhart's conception of the Cid.

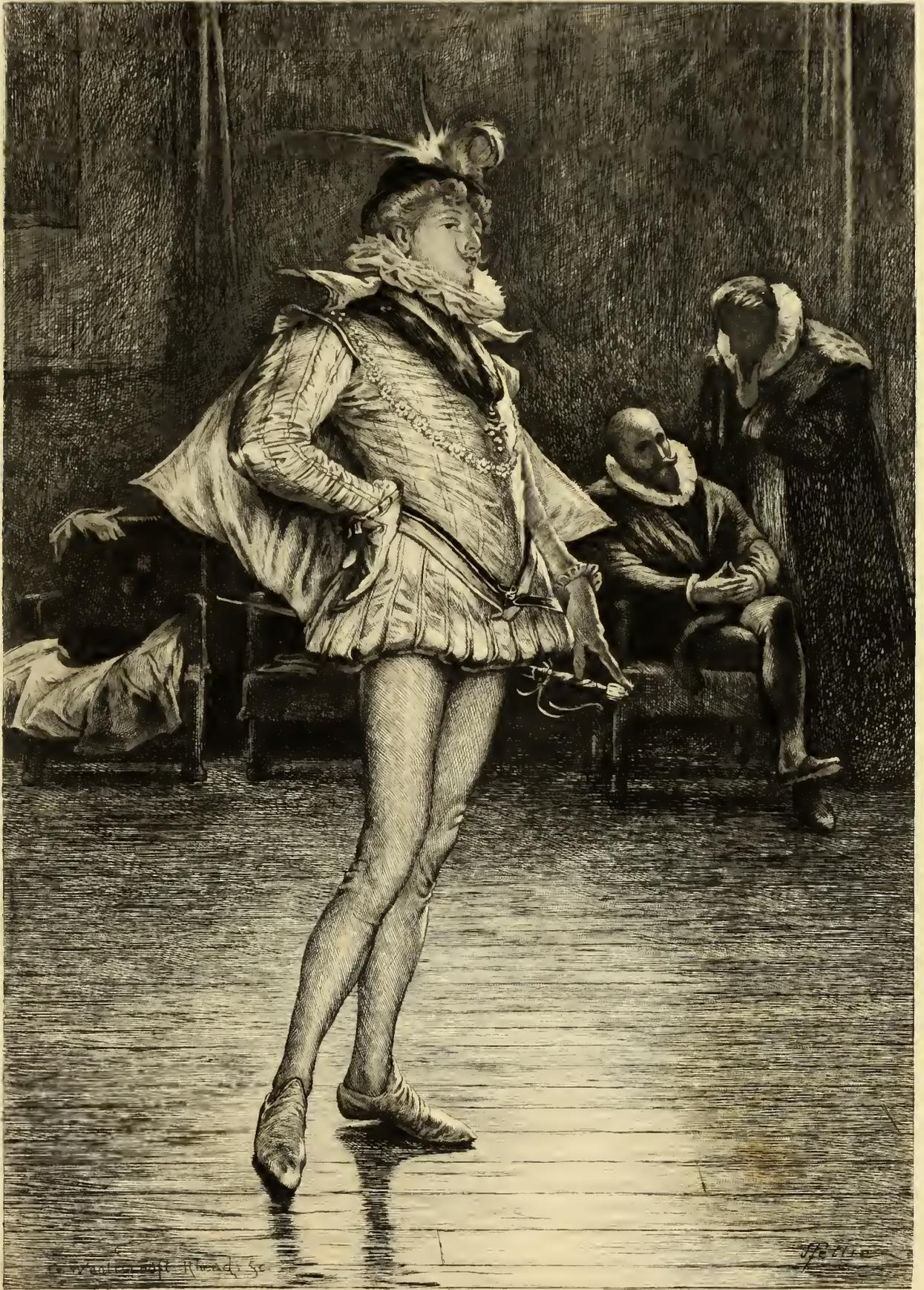
All these painters, with the exception of Mr. George Reid, belong to the class with whom a pictorial motive, a problem in colour, line, or illumination, is rare. Their art is not only subordinate to the story it has to tell; it is too often killed, pictorially, by the literary significance laid upon it. Subjects are chosen that would make a first-rate page of prose, but which stubbornly rebel against the conditions of art. With the group of painters now to be noticed the reverse is the case. Superficially, not much distinction is to be traced, perhaps, between the two groups. But the practised eye sees at once that, whereas in the one themes are chosen for their association or their power to touch the everyday feelings, in the other they are selected for the pictorial opportunity they give. Among the painters now to be noticed we find many instances of subjects that are pictorially fine, while they are unsatisfactory from the literary point of view. On the other hand, we seldom or never find one which tells itself completely as a story, while throwing insurmountable stumbling-blocks in the way of art. An instance of the former is Mr. Orchardson's *Voltaire*. For a painter with his gifts nothing could well be finer than the opportunity it gave. Many guests, in costumes at once rich and picturesque, could be set about a table in a splendid room. Their attention could be concentrated upon a single point. A telling arrangement of the masses was almost enforced by the necessity of making room for the furious little personality of the insulted Arouet on one side or the other of the canvas. Even such minor accidents as the presence of servants ministered to a pictorial necessity, and helped at once to furnish the scene, and to give it depth. Pictorially, then, *Voltaire* turned out a triumph. But from the narratory, or even the dramatic standpoint, it left much to be desired. No one, unacquainted with the history of Voltaire's youth, could even guess what it was all about, while the energy of his action makes it impossible to enjoy the picture fully without knowing. It is, in fact, almost hopeless to find a subject in books which shall entirely help the artist. In nearly all pictures which illustrate, the *data* stand in the way of

perfection. Imagine what the Dutch masters would have been had they taken their themes from writers. Now and then, instead of building on a foundation of their own, they were content to illustrate, to accept *data*, and in nearly every instance the pictures so made stand on a lower level than the rest of their work. To this religious art seems at first sight to offer exceptions. But does it really do so? Is it not incontestable that the greatest religious pictures are just those in which the invention of the artist has worked most freely? Is not Raphael's *Madonna di San Sisto* greater than his *Transfiguration*?

The finest subject a painter can have is a portrait, and this, again, seems to throw doubt upon what I have said. For in a portrait the *data* are more stubborn than anywhere else. But the explanation is obvious enough. In a portrait the *data* themselves have unity. The greatest difficulty before the painter is that of concentration—of giving his work a sufficient centre of interest, and keeping everything else in due subordination to it. All this is done for him when he has to paint a portrait, and especially a half-length. The head gives him the motive he wants exactly in the right place. It invites, moreover, any amount of elaboration he cares to give, and it affords him a full opportunity for that peering beneath the surface and selection of essentials in which art so greatly consists. I have said a half-length, because in a full-length the head is scarcely in the right place on the canvas, while in a bust picture it takes up too much of the field. The most completely flawless pictures in existence, to my mind, are such things as Rembrandt's *Doreur* and his own portrait in the National Gallery (No. 672), as Holbein's *Sir Thomas Morrett* at Dresden, as Titian's *Laura de' Dianti*, or Raphael's *Julius II.* The *Innocent X.* of Velasquez, in the Doria-Pamphili Palace, suffers by its size, and the magnificent sketch or replica at Apsley House by its want of it. In all these, vigour and reticence, comprehension and suppression, are combined into that triumph of art—perfect unity with perfect force.

To return from this digression. It seems to me that the distinctive mark of this group of Scottish painters is the presence in every one of their works of a pictorial motive behind and above the subject. Sometimes the motive is so slight that it is difficult to get those who are not in full sympathy with the artistic bent of mind to believe in its existence. To those who are, it is easy to see that in all the pictures to which I am here alluding there is some colour chord, or some contrast of mass or line, to which a great deal in the way of subject or dramatic sentiment would have been cheerfully sacrificed. In saying this, I know very well that I am only repeating what should be a familiar idea to every one who concerns himself with pictures. But, unfortunately, in England art and sentimentality have too often the wrong precedence both in critical theories and in what are supposed to be works of art.

The first of this group to emerge from the obscurity of his early years was Mr. John Pettie. Born in Edinburgh in 1839, he began his regular art education at the age of sixteen. His school was the Trustees' Academy, then directed by Robert Scott Lauder and Mr. John Ballantyne, where he was a fellow-pupil with Mr. Orchardson. His first picture—*The Prison Pet*—was exhibited in Edinburgh in 1859. In 1861 he sent a picture to the Academy, and twelve months later followed it to London. Academy honours were not slow in coming, for in 1866, on the exhibition of his *Arrest for Witchcraft*, now at Melbourne, he was elected an A.R.A. Nine years later he became a full Member. With a slight change in the dates, what I have said of Pettie might stand for Orchardson. Born four years sooner, his development was somewhat slower than that of his brother artist, and it was not until 1869 and 1877 respectively that he reached the first and second rung on the short academic ladder. To return to Mr. Pettie. From the first he has been more entirely given over to colour than, perhaps, any other modern artist. In his early years he sought about, indeed, with solicitude, for telling subjects, and painted such things as the *Drumhead Courtmartial*, the *Disgrace of Wolsey*, *Terms to the Besieged*, *Juliet and Friar Lawrence*, *Jacobites* (his diploma picture), *The Sword and Dagger Fight*, and *The*



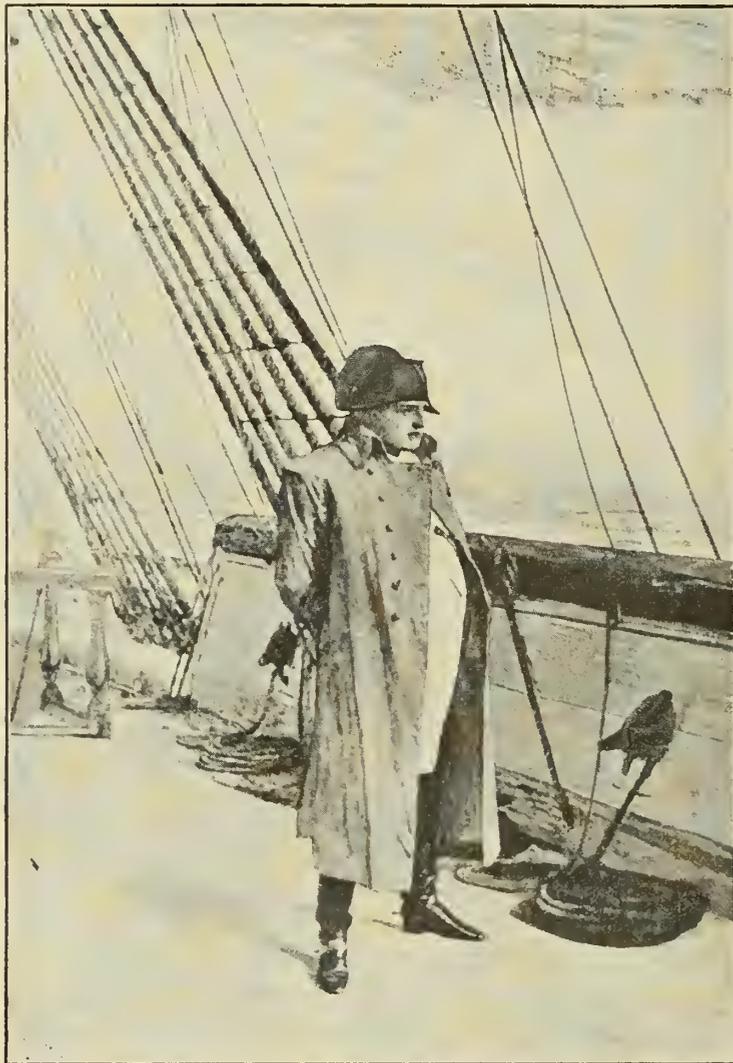
Death Warrant. As time went on, however, he became ever more and more content to rest upon strictly pictorial elements for success, and has painted things in which there was just sufficient subject to afford a title. Among his best works of this class may be placed the small picture—‘*Dost Know this Water-fly?*’—here engraved; the *Sir Peter and Lady Teazle*, which has been hanging beside it all this summer at Manchester; *The Chieftain’s Candlesticks*; and *The Vigil*, in the Chantrey Fund Collection. In the first and last of these the painter’s aim has been a silvery coolness, in all the rest, warmth of colour.

If colour quality is enough to make a painter remembered, and we know very well it is, then Pettie’s fame is safe. In this respect some of his pictures seem to me to have passages in them which have scarcely been beaten. Look, for instance, at the figure of Sir Peter Teazle, in his plum-coloured coat, and at the satin-wood furniture about him. The delicacy which leads every tint to its highest power, to its fullest vibration, could not be more richly displayed. For the same gift put to more virile use—to the use which Rubens would make of it—turn to the great picture at Hamburg, the *Death Warrant*. Here some half-a-dozen grave statesmen sit about a council-board, at the head of which a young king, Edward VI., is enthroned. Before him, on the table, lie a warrant and a pen, but, with the pity of youth—of youth, perhaps, with which death and judgment are ever present—he hesitates to sign. Dramatically, the picture has its faults. Like many others by the same hand, it is a little bare and unfurnished. Some signs of other business at the council might have been an improvement, and would at least have taken away the formal, *tableau-vivant* look which at present hangs about the composition. But the painting is magnificent. The head of the ruddy, middle-aged senator on the left—he was painted from the artist’s father—has the vigour, warmth, and solidity of a Rubens. And all over the canvas the same glow, the same ease, the same breadth of brushing, are to be enjoyed. Scottish painting has sometimes been called serious, literal, and cold. When we remember that this picture of Mr. Pettie’s is not by any means a single apparition, but only a strong example of one of the main characteristics of Scottish art for a century past, such a notion seems droll enough.

I have said that Mr. Pettie’s pictures are apt to be unfurnished. In his concentration upon pictorial qualities he is apt to forget that action implies accessories, and to force upon us the sense of unreality we feel before what is known on the stage, I fancy, as a carpenter’s scene. For this very reason I do not agree with the fault-finding of which his Chantrey picture has been the object. In this *Vigil* his besetting sin becomes a source of strength. Fine in colour, like the rest of his work, it gains in dramatic force from its cool bareness. The young soldier, who kneels in the cold Norman nave, has watched alone through the chills of night, and the empty spaces, the long row of solid piers through which the dawn steals, the distant glimmer of a now useless lamp, and the scanty show of warlike properties which bestrew the front of the picture, all help to enforce the idea of his solitary, almost penitential vigil. The same high, silvery tones are employed in the small picture etched by Mr. Rhead. ‘*Dost Know this Water-fly?*’—Hamlet’s contemptuous question could receive no more pungent commentary. In this picture the long-bodied, feathery-winged, small-headed, sheeny insect, is curiously hinted at by the empty-pated courtier, and the colour-tones it suggests adapted with unerring instinct to the purpose of the painter. The things I have named show Mr. Pettie at his best. At his worst he is never less than a colourist, but he becomes too loose of hand and too easily contented in everything that has not to do with colour. In *The Jester’s Merrythought*, for instance, the motive was not only aggressively trivial, but the whole linear constitution of the scene was poor and insignificant.

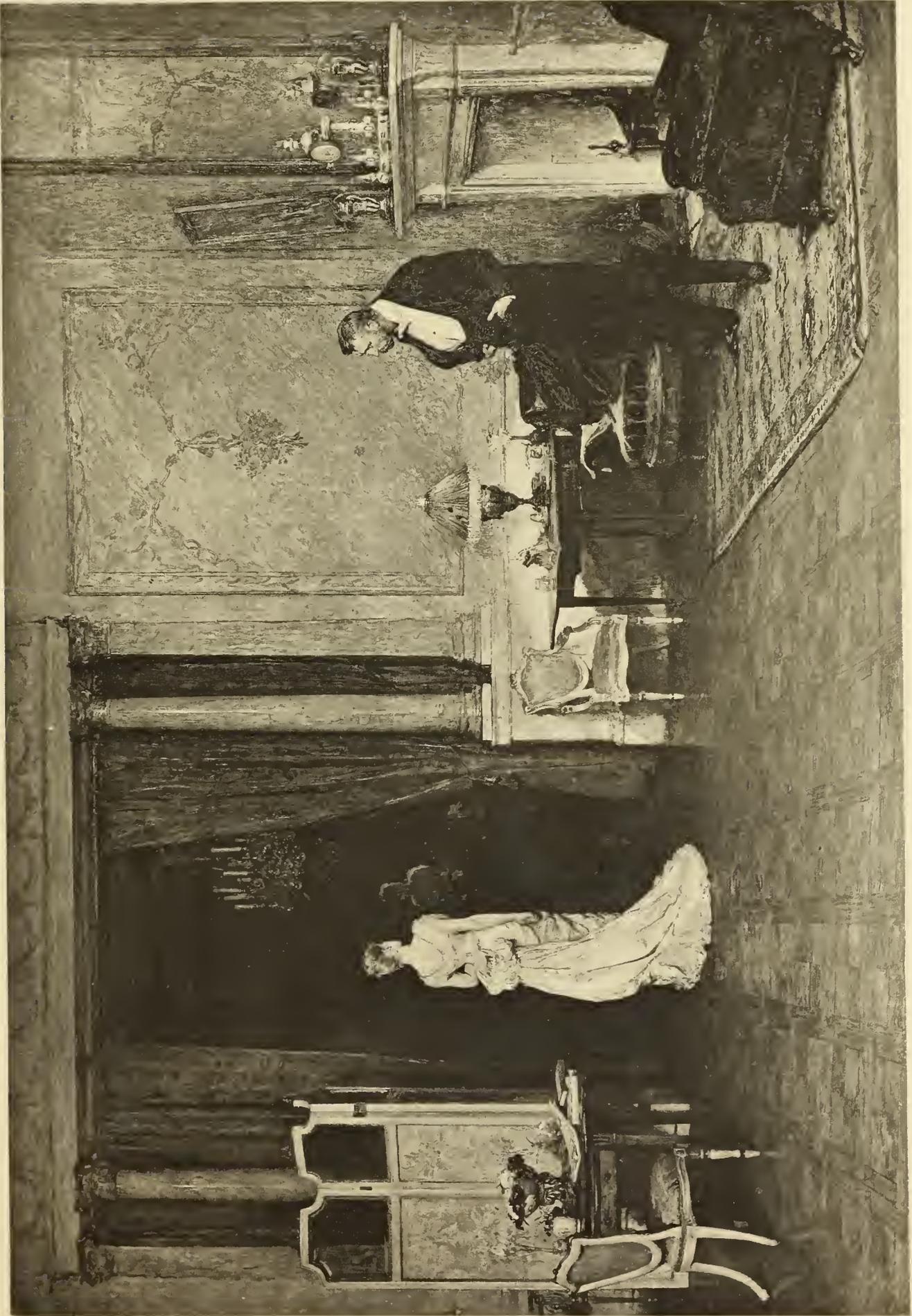
The present great reputation of Mr. Orchardson has been the growth of the last ten years. Before that he was a delightful artist, but his work charmed rather by its refinement, by its subtlety of colour and quietly significant design, than by anything that could

be called force. His pictures were almost grey in effect, 'like the back of old tapestry,' as M. Chesneau phrased it. The masterpiece of that period was, perhaps, the *Queen of the Swords*, which had so great a success at Paris in 1878. Two years later there appeared at the Academy a picture which at once raised its author's fame to a higher level. This was the *Napoleon on Board the Bellerophon*—the conqueror of Europe taking his silent farewell of the continent which had once been his own. In this picture Mr. Orchardson not only carried the dramatic faculty, of which he had already given proof in such pictures



NAPOLEON ON THE BELLEROPHON. FROM THE PICTURE BY W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.

as *The Challenge*, to a much higher expression, he evinced a creative power as yet unsurpassed, for his figure of Napoleon is a creation. The solidity of the pose, the simplicity of the lines, the breadth of the masses of light and shade, the quiet, warm colour, strengthened here by a note of rich black, there by a touch of red where the cordon of the Legion peeps out from beneath the coat, all help to build up the personality of the first of the Bonapartes. No better instance of what art can do, of what treatment means could easily be found than this figure. It may sound absurd to many people to talk as if the handling of a great-coat could add to the dignity of a soldier, or the quality of its tint enhance his look of life; but that is the ineffable secret of art. It is by mastery in points like these that Mr. Orchardson's figure rises to such a pitch of vitality and becomes what I have called it, a creation.



In the pictures which, since 1880, have year by year made Mr. Orchardson's contributions so keenly looked for at the Academy, he has at once contrived to touch wider sympathies than he reached before, and to vastly reinforce and enrich his art. Technically, the finest of all these was the *Voltaire*; but the *Mariage de Convenance*, too, and its sequel, *Ichabod*—to give it its first excellent name—were full of splendid colour, and of a peculiar *finesse* of draughtsmanship and handling. The *First Cloud* differs mainly in technique from the two marriage pictures which went before it. The interest is much the same in all three, except that in the two first the fault is laid on the woman, and in the last on the man. The heroine of the *Mariage de Convenance* is a Madame Bovary, the hero of the *First Cloud*, a less reposeful Grandcourt. In character this man's head is,



SKETCHES BY W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.

perhaps, the finest Mr. Orchardson has painted. The contending emotions, the selfish anger, which is just disappearing to leave room for a look, not of shame exactly, but of apprehension lest he has gone too far for his own comfort, and the slight dishevelment suggestive of a ball supper, all help to throw light into a narrow heart. Technically, the picture is an exercise in high tones. The dress-clothes of the man and the dark recess into the inner room, form the main passages of low tone against a breadth of creamy whites, silvery greys, yellows like Australian gold, and various notes of rose, pale blue-green, and the mysterious tints of an oak parquet. In every picture by Mr. Orchardson there is some delicious passage of still life. In the *Voltaire* and the two first *ménages*, it was fruit and silver on a table; here it is a Louis XVI. screen and the orthodox *guéridon*, heaped with flowers and knick-knacks, which stands beside it, and a mantelpiece with its *batterie* of Sèvres. As compositions no one of the marriage pictures can be compared to either the *Napoleon* or the *Voltaire*; but in character, and in another point over which failure is easy, the union of style with actuality, they are great.

But it is quite possible that a century hence Mr. Orchardson's portraits will be valued even more highly than his subject pictures. They are not very numerous, and now and then they fail to please. The best, however, are in the very fore-front of art. Among these I may name the half-lengths of his wife, and of her father, Mr. Moxon; of Mrs. Ralli, exhibited at the Academy in 1885, and of Mrs. Joseph, exhibited in 1887. In most ways the last of the four was the best. It was richer in colour, simpler in handling, and as a whole more forcible than its predecessors. It may be objected that all this is panegyric. To that I say that it seems to me that Mr. Orchardson is exactly one of those painters against whom criticism is out of place. His individuality is so subtle, and it has



SKETCH FOR A PICTURE. BY W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A.

at its service so rich a technique, that all he does has an organic fulness that must be accepted as a whole, with the flaws to which everything man creates is subject. If I were asked to point out those flaws as they appear to me, I could hit upon nothing more important than an occasional hot note—if I may use such a phrase—in his colour, or the little harmless mannerism which leads him to place the eyes of his figures too far from their mouths, and to fill the interval with too much nose. When such flaws exist in works which are the deliberate creations of thought, they may be rightly insisted on. They are then easily cured, and their absence will certainly add to that balance which is the highest perfection reached by such art. But with those whose art is in their bones it is no use to talk in such a way. We must accept the images their fancy creates, and must be content to look upon the little errors our eyes can spy out as a comforting proof that they, too, are mortal.

With Orchardson and Pettie must be classed two artists of not vastly unequal gifts,



but of singularly different powers of attraction for the public. These are Mr. R. W. Macbeth and Mr. Tom Graham. Mr. Macbeth's is the more vigorous genius of the two. The pictures with which he first made his mark, the *Lincolnshire Gang* and the *Potatoe Harvest*, were things that would have asserted themselves in any exhibition. Since they were at the Academy his painting has become ever slighter, higher in tone, and less full and resonant in colour. Two sketches for the pictures I have named are in the collection of Mr. Humphrey Roberts. The idea they give of their author's power is, perhaps, better than is to be gathered from his finished pictures. Of late years Mr. Macbeth's time has been mostly given to reproductive etching, in which he has rapidly taken a place among English masters of the point corresponding to that filled by M. Waltner abroad. Mr. Macbeth is still in the prime of life; he was born in Glasgow in 1848. His father, Mr. Norman Macbeth, is a Scottish portrait-painter who has followed his art with much success, and has brought up three sons to the same career. Mr. Robert Macbeth is an Associate of the Royal Academy.

Mr. Tom Graham passed his early life in Edinburgh, but has painted for some years in London. As a colourist he has now and then touched the high-water mark of his school. His management of all sorts of greys is particularly refined and sensitive. Unfortunately he seldom succeeds in giving his pictures *raison d'être* beyond colour. In their arrangement they show no real gift for combination either of line or mass, and, in their lighting, little sense of depth and value. One of the best things by Mr. Graham I ever saw was a single figure of a girl in some kind of many-coloured dress. It hangs, or used to hang, in Mr. Robert Macbeth's studio. Mr. Macbeth's name reminds me of one which may soon be known as that of an equally gifted etcher. Within the last few months I have seen a set of plates from the modern Dutchmen and the masters of Fontainebleau, which suggest that in Mr. William Hole, A.R.S.A., Scotland has produced a second great interpreter with the point. The plates in question will, I suppose, be published by the time these lines are in print. They form part of the illustrations to the memorial catalogue of the French and Dutch pictures collected at Edinburgh in 1886. In colour, fidelity, and excellence of method, the impressions I saw at the Scottish Water-colour Exhibition in the autumn of 1887 were quite first-rate.

Among painters of a younger generation there are many over whom I should like to dwell. But space is short, and the men themselves so young that whatever might now be said of their art might soon be obsolete. Among older men, too, there are many who would demand a page in a more exhaustive history, such as Mr. Hugh Cameron, a master, in his way, of tone and atmosphere; the brothers Burr; Mr. Gourlay Steeli, the *animalier*; Mr. Otto Leyde; Mr. James Archer; and several others. To have attempted to notice every individual phase of Scottish art in chapters like these would have turned them into a catalogue, to which, I fear, they already bear too much resemblance.

Before I write 'finis,' however, I must find space for a few words on the last phase in painting in which any Scot has distinguished himself. This is our British development of Impressionism. With us 'impressionism' means not so much concentration upon an effect, upon a momentary or exclusive impression, as satisfaction with actuality. One of the ablest of those who take this view of art is Mr. John Reid. In his pictures subject goes for very little, even when he paints things so sensational as his *Shipwreck* of a few seasons ago. Frankness of colour, truth of value, and a coherent arabesque used to distinguish them all. Of late, however, he has shown a tendency to lose the oneness, the vigour of local tint, which used to distinguish his work, and to allow his pictures to become too black, or too blue, or too brown. In the matter of brushing and technic generally, he is, perhaps, the most direct and forcible of all our younger artists.

Looking back over the path we have travelled, I think all who have persevered with

me to the end will allow that experience has refuted those who would minimise the artistic powers of the Scotch. The attempt has, of course, been based on race characteristics, and those who sympathise with it may answer of this man, 'He is a Celt,' or of that, 'His name shows him to be Latin.' In that fashion it would be easy enough to reduce the people on whom the disability is placed to a handful too small for any sort of generalisation. As a fact, every strain of blood which makes up the Scottish people has produced its share of artists, and between the fiery or swarthy Celt, the big-boned Lowlander, and even those who, like Mr. Orchardson, have more than a slight cross of the south European, it is impossible to make a distinction based on their art. For a century past Scotland has produced more good artists than any other country in the world of equal size, and has produced them under great disadvantages. For, unlike Holland and Belgium, it is only within recent years that she has shaken herself free of poverty, and only in a centre here and there that she has that density of population which is a condition of art. Another great difficulty with which she has to contend is the loss of nearly all her sons who rise into the front rank. Conscious of their powers, they naturally seek a wider field, and deprive their country of that previous generation on which most schools depend for their knowledge. But in spite of all this, Scotland has one of the few original schools. More indifferent than it should be to the powers of line, it uses colour with greater freedom and a more daring vigour than any other, and yet in its productions there is little sign of that mere paint-slinging, that dexterity founded on nothing but personal predilection, into which colour for its own sake is apt to sink. I do not mean, of course, that this individuality has always been shown. In the beginning, painting north of the Tweed was as timid as it was in England before the days of Hogarth. But as soon as it found its feet, as soon as in Raeburn Scotland could boast a born painter, a feature began to declare itself on which not a little of the individuality of her art even yet depends. This feature is a rigorous selection, a determination to succeed by carrying some single artistic virtue to the highest conceivable pitch, rather than by a lower degree of excellence in many. To this, of course, there have been great exceptions. Wilkie, himself, was a conspicuous exception. But, nevertheless, it holds true of the main development. Raeburn was above all things a draughtsman and modeller; but the chief note of his art is selection, and so it is of the portraitists who formed themselves upon him. The later school is practically one of colour-selection; by its members colour is honoured with a more exclusive devotion than it has found elsewhere since the days of Titian. If we borrow a phrase from Ingres, and look upon fine colour as almost immoral, we shall look as little as we can at Scottish pictures. If, on the other hand, we have courage to say that as colour is the special organ of the painter, so upon what he does with it must he depend for his right to the name, then we cannot refuse to allow that the art of the North has a sure title to honour.

FINIS.

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